



Homes for Independent Living

A handbook for residents

It is our promise that our residents are at the centre of our service. We treat every resident with respect and will maintain your privacy and confidentiality at all times. We promote your independence and choice. Our key priorities include your well-being, safety and security. We involve residents in the management of our service.

Medway
COUNCIL
Serving You

My scheme support officer

Name:

Scheme contact number:

Contents

We trust you, your relatives or friends will find the information contained in this booklet useful as you settle into your new environment. This booklet will explain and help you understand:

1. What are Homes for Independent Living?
2. The facilities available in the schemes
3. The role of the scheme support officer
4. Responsibilities of your scheme support officer
5. Support planning
6. What your responsibilities are as a resident
7. Fire procedure
8. Health and safety
9. Keys and security
10. Adult abuse
11. Medway Lifeline system
12. Consultation and involvement
13. Equality and diversity
14. How to complain
15. Tenants' welcome pack
16. Useful contacts and information



1. What are Homes for Independent Living?

Homes for Independent Living are specifically designed for people who are aged 60 and over, who need smaller more manageable properties with the reassurance that help is available from the scheme support officer or via the 24-hour community alarm service fitted in each unit. It provides a supportive environment where you can remain independent. Medway Council has eight Homes for Independent Living schemes across Gillingham, Twydall and Rainham.

Accommodation is completely independent and can vary from studio flats to one-bedroom flats and some bungalows. These units cannot be purchased under the Right to Buy or Right to Acquire schemes. Tenancies can only be succeeded by a spouse or civil partner and not by any other family members.

2. The facilities available in the schemes

- Self-contained accommodation.
- Door entry system with CCTV.
- Pleasant gardens.
- Communal lounge.
- Computer in communal lounge.
- Laundry room with washing and drying machines.
- Guest room in most schemes for relatives and friends to stay for a nominal charge (ranging from £8 to £12). Reservations are made via the scheme support officer.
- A number of schemes arrange social activities through a social club.

3. The role of the scheme support officer

Each of the schemes has an appointed scheme support officer (some units are dual managed) who is available Monday to Friday during normal working hours. Each flat has a pull cord system that ensures help is available in an emergency situation 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

To ensure your safety it is our policy not to leave you more than two days without contact. This means that on bank holidays a scheme support officer will contact you in person by buzz round or by remote call up through Lifeline.

During the week there may be times when your scheme support officer is not on site; for example annual leave, attending training, meetings and sickness. In these circumstances another scheme support officer will check on you either by visiting or buzz round.

4. Responsibilities of the scheme support officer

The responsibility of the scheme support officer is to help you live independently while ensuring that your lifestyle is comfortable, enjoyable and secure.

The scheme support officer will:

- provide a service that responds to an individual's needs;
- complete an assessment with you to identify support needs;
- create a support plan with you based on your needs, with actions and agreed time scales. Meetings will take place to discuss and assist your progress;
- liaise with outside agencies such as social or health services;
- help with budgeting and financial management
- help you understand the rights and obligations of your tenancy;
- encourage and enable residents to organise social events and promote resident involvement;
- look after the administration and maintenance of the scheme including health and safety.

The scheme support officer cannot:

- clean the inside of your accommodation;
- take over from your family, relatives and friends to give the support and care that they can provide;
- provide any form of care or nursing service;
- give medication;

- collect, handle or manage your money;
- shop for you or cook your meals.

However, they can help you in accessing some of these services through external agencies.

5. Support planning

After moving in the scheme support officer will work with you to produce a support plan. Housing Related Support is a government funded initiative that requires us to record and monitor the services we provide to you. The plan can be reviewed sooner if you wish, or if your circumstances change. As part of the support plan your specific needs will be identified and the scheme support officer will work with a range of agencies to help you stay independent. No external organisations will be given access to information without your permission.

6. What are your responsibilities as a resident?

You are responsible for paying your rent, service charges, support charges, council tax, water rates, and other utility bills. Service charges usually cover costs like cleaning, gardening and maintenance of common areas. Support charges cover the cost of the scheme support officer, the alarm system and 24-hour call out, although the costs of these may be covered by housing benefit.

As residents live together and some facilities are shared there are a few restrictions and rules to ensure that all our residents live in a safe, comfortable and secure environment. This is your home and we try very hard to keep these restrictions to an absolute minimum. If you feel that any of these rules are unjust then please talk to your scheme support officer.

Repairs

It is your responsibility to inform Housing Services of any repairs or general maintenance required to your property. You can do this by contacting the Housing Repairs Team or contact

your scheme support officer.

If you are unsure what repair may be required please speak with your scheme support officer who will be able to support you in reporting this.

Reporting repairs

To report a repair during normal office hours phone **01634 333601** or free phone **0800 0730073** (Monday - Friday, 8am - 8pm Saturday, 9am - 1pm).

Out of hours emergency repairs

To report an emergency repair outside of normal office hours or on bank holidays please contact the out of hours control centre on **01634 304400**. Some examples of emergency repairs include total loss of electric power or water supply and broken external windows that needs boarding up.

Pets

The only pets allowed in the accommodation are small caged birds and fish. If you wish to keep these pets please inform and obtain the permission of your scheme support officer beforehand.

Smoking

While you may smoke in your own property, as from July 2007 it became an offence to smoke in communal areas such as laundry rooms, corridors and communal lounges, this includes electronic cigarettes. It is your responsibility to make sure that your visitors do not smoke in any of the communal areas.

Mobility scooters

Our schemes were built prior to mobility scooters being readily available. Schemes have not been designed for these in terms of layout or storage capacity. Medway Council has been able to provide some external storage at the following schemes:

- Brennan/Marlborough
- Suffolk/Woodchurch/St. Marks
- Esmonde/Longford

Ensuring our residents live in a healthy, safe

environment is vitally important to us. Due to this mobility scooters are not allowed within schemes, as this will breach health, safety and fire regulations.

Only electric wheelchairs are acceptable within schemes. Please ask for permission from your scheme support officer if you are considering purchasing a mobility scooter.

Locks

Please do not fit any extra door locks or chains to your front door as, should an emergency occur your scheme support officer or the emergency services may need to gain urgent access to your property.

Going out

If, in the morning, you have not yet received a buzz round call from the scheme support officer and you are going out, please either leave a note in the office or central control so they can advise the scheme support officer that you are ok and have gone out; or write a note on the white boards outside the scheme office.

Please also let the scheme support officer know when you are going to be away. This will save time, especially in an emergency, looking for residents who are away from the scheme. If your family or next of kin are going to be away for an extended period of time or their contact details change inform the scheme support officer and provide the alternative contact details.

In summary it is your responsibility to:

- report repairs or general maintenance needed to your property;
- inform your scheme support officer if you wish to keep any small pets;
- ensure that you or any of your guests do not smoke in communal areas;
- not fit any extra door locks or chains to your front door;
- inform the scheme support officer if you will be away from the scheme overnight or for an extended period of time;

- notify the scheme support officer if your next of kin is going to be away for an extended period of time and if they have any new or alternative contact details.

7. Fire procedure

The fire procedure will be explained carefully to you during your scheme induction. There should be fire safety instructions on the back of your front door. In all schemes a stay put policy is in place. If the smoke detector goes off in your flat and it is a false alarm or if the fire alarm sounds in your flat but your flat is not on fire you must stay in your flat.

If the fire is in your flat you must make your way to the nearest exit immediately. Closing the doors as you go, you must make your way to a place of safety outside the building.

Do not use the lift. If you are in the common parts (corridors, lounge, laundry, kitchen etc) when the fire alarm sounds, you must make your way to the nearest exit. Make your way to a place of safety outside the building and do not re-enter the building until told it is safe to do so.

To conform to fire regulations, all flat doors must remain shut. In some cases the scheme support officer may have authorised the door closure to be removed. This can only be done if the front door remains shut. Regular inspections will be carried out to ensure this happens.

Fire alarms are tested every week so the alarm may sound even when there is not a fire.

By following these rules you should reduce the risk of a fire starting in your home:

- Make sure cigarettes are fully extinguished and never smoke in bed.
- Never leave chip pans unattended
- No open flames like candles in flats.

8. Health and safety

A volunteer from the scheme will accompany the scheme support officer in carrying out regular checks around the scheme, identifying any health and safety concerns or outstanding repairs.

Residents are encouraged to report any health and safety concerns they have to their scheme support officer who will log your concern and report it to the necessary department to resolve the issue. Risk assessments of each scheme are carried out annually.

9. Keys and security

You will be provided with a key to your property and a fob to the main security door. Your scheme support officer has a master key and is able to access your property in the event of an emergency. For this reason, please do not fit any additional locks or chains to your front door, as this could slow down an attempt to get to you. The scheme support officers will not let themselves into your property for any other reason without your prior permission, and will not invade your privacy.

If your scheme has been fitted with a main security door lock, then you are unable to get the keys cut yourself. If you lose this key, please inform your scheme support officer straight away. There will be a charge to replace this. Some residents choose to have a key safe fitted close to their front doors. These are small secure boxes where you can leave a key to provide quick and easy access for relatives or carers.

Homes for Independent Living are only as secure as the residents who live there. If the door alarm rings in your flat always ask who is calling and only let them in when you are satisfied that you know who they are. Most importantly please remember you must only let people in who are visiting you.

Medway Council insures the structure of the building and all the communal equipment.

We advise that you take out your own home contents insurance. Your scheme support officer can give you details of this.

10. Adult abuse

Adult abuse is any behaviour towards a person that causes him or her harm, endangers life or violates their rights. Abuse can take many forms including:

- financial;
- physical;
- sexual;
- emotional;
- neglect;
- discrimination.

Some people can harm, distress and mistreat others for a number of reasons, sometimes unintentionally. Those people may include:

- family members and friends;
- neighbours;
- carers;
- staff members;
- a health care professional.

If you have any concerns about any of the above speak to your scheme support officer or phone Adult Social Services on **01634 334466**.

11. Medway Lifeline system

All residents in the schemes are provided with the Medway Lifeline system. This is a telephone based community alarm system that is operated by professional, caring staff, 24-hours-a-day, every day of the year providing help, support and security.

You can connect to the Lifeline system by the simple press of a button or by pulling one of the specially installed cords that are in your property (these will be explained to you by the scheme support officer). In the case of an emergency, pressing the button will enable two-way voice contact between you and the operator. The operator will instantly be able to access all of your recorded details. Upon stating

your problem or difficulty, Lifeline staff will be able to provide an efficient response – this could be contacting the emergency services or a next of kin on your behalf. The pull cords, speech modules and modules will be tested quarterly by your scheme support officer.

It is important that you inform your scheme support officer if any of your details or contact numbers change.

Should the Lifeline system fail due to a major electrical power failure, the direct line to the 24 hour emergency control centre is **01634 291365**. The pull cords/speech modules and pendants will be tested quarterly by your senior support officer.

12. Consultation and involvement

Medway Council is always keen to take your thoughts and views into consideration in delivering housing services.

There are a range of ways in which you can make your voice heard as well as find out about things that may affect you as a resident including:

- taking part in the Homes for Independent Living Focus Group in which residents, managers and senior managers come together to discuss issues relating to the scheme service;
- attending meetings;
- completing surveys;
- providing feedback on our publications;
- providing articles for the residents magazine *Housing Matters*;
- phoning, emailing or writing to us with your views.

If you would like to get involved or find out more contact our Community Development Officer:

Resident Participation

FREEPOST Licence No. RRXB-CCXR-JGZJ

Medway Council, Housing Services, Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, Kent, ME4 4TR

Phone: 01634 333201

Email: tenant.participation@medway.gov.uk

The scheme support officer also arranges regular meetings with residents so any issues regarding the scheme can be raised and discussed. The council's independent living manager or team leader can also be invited to attend so you can put questions to them directly.

13. Equality and diversity

Housing Services is committed to providing excellent customer service, by putting our residents at the centre of everything we do. We offer you the following promise:

“All our residents will be treated fairly, regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality, ethnic or national origin, colour, disability, gender (including gender identity/presentation), marital status, family commitments, caring responsibilities, sexual orientation, age, HIV status, religious or political beliefs or social class.”

If you feel that you have been treated unfairly please let us know.

14. How to complain

Medway Council Housing Services values customers' compliments, comments and complaints as they provide feedback on our performance and help us to improve our services. If you feel that the service you are receiving is not up to standard, please speak to your scheme support officer. The scheme support officer will try to resolve any issues you may have.

If you feel you would like to take the matter further, or the issue is about a scheme support officer then please contact:

Medway Council Customer Contact, Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, Kent, ME4 4TR
Phone: 01634 333333

Email: customer.relations@medway.gov.uk
www.medway.gov.uk/information/contactus/complaintsandcompliments.aspx

A copy of the complaints procedure is displayed in each scheme.

15. Tenants' welcome pack

Our Tenants' Welcome Pack will provide you with all the information you need to help you throughout your tenancy. It provides advice on tenancy management, paying rent, reporting repairs and much more.

Visit www.medway.gov.uk/housing/counciltenantsleaseholders.aspx and then select - Tenants' welcome pack 2016.

If you are unable to access a copy online or would like it in an alternative format, please email tenant.participation@medway.gov.uk or phone **01634 333201**.

16. Useful contacts and information

Services

Medway Lifeline	01634 567999
Social Services (out of hours)	03000 41 6161
Age UK	0800 678 11 74
Citizens Advice Bureau	01634 383760
Kent Association for the Blind	01634 332929
Pension Service	0345 606 0265
The Samaritans (Medway)	116123
Arriva Bus Timetables	0871 2002233
Medway Council	01634 306000

Police

To report a crime	01622 690690
Crimestoppers	0800 555111
Non-emergencies	101

Age UK Medway

(day centre for older people)

Write to: The Mackenney Centre,
Woodlands Road, Gillingham, Kent ME7
Phone: **01634 572616**

Welcome Day Centre

(day centre for older people, caters especially for ethnic minority groups)

Open: Tues, Weds and Thurs - 9am - 4.30pm

Write to: 44-46 High Street, Chatham,
Kent, ME4 4DS

Phone: **01634 844639**

Email: welcome@daycentre44.wanadoo.co.uk

Citizens Rights for Older People (CROP)

Write to: 9a High Street, Lenham, Kent, ME17 2QD

Phone: **01622 851200**

Email: maidstone@cropkent.org.uk

Medway Maritime Hospital

Windmill Road, Gillingham, Kent ME7 5NY

Phone: **01634 830000**.

Who to contact

To talk to a housing officer during normal working hours about your rent or any tenancy related matter including ASB.

Phone: **01634 333344**

Email: neighbourhoodhousingofficers@medway.gov.uk

Website: www.medway.gov.uk

Minicom: **01634 333111**

A full range of Medway Council Housing Services' policies and service standards are available on request from your scheme support officer or on www.medway.gov.uk/housing

This information can be made available in other formats from **01634 333333**

If you have any questions about this leaflet and you want to speak to someone in your own language please ring **01634 335577**

বাংলা 331780
中文 331781
ગુજરાતી 331782

हिंदी 331783
ਪੰਜਾਬੀ 331784
Polski 332373

کوردی 331841
ଏକହସ୍ତକବ 331786
اردو 331785

فارسی 331840
Русский 332374
Lietuviškai 332372