



# Support Services Policy

## Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Derwent Living officers conduct an assessment of customer's individual needs and have the ability to signpost customers to appropriate support services in order to sustain the tenancy. Derwent Living staff can refer any customer to this service and the support service co-ordinator will either contact the customer directly, to agree an action plan and refer them to appropriate agencies or will give the officer advice on how they should make the referral.

## The Aim of the Service

To offer support and guidance to our customers to enable them to conduct and sustain their tenancies effectively.

Support services will be offered to all customers, regardless of age, culture, disability, gender, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity. Monitoring of take-up of support service will take place, to ensure services are fair and accessible to all of Derwent Living customer groups.

Derwent Living will aim to develop services which are offered to all new / prospective tenants with the objective of assisting them to maximize the potential offered to them.

## Objectives

- Providing resettlement support.
- Budgeting and debt advice and signposting to specialist agencies.
- Maximizing income and advice on welfare benefits.
- Providing assistance in setting up a new home and accessing appropriate grants and funds.
- Providing support to cope with physical & mental health issues.
- Enabling access to other services within the community.
- Providing advice on housing issues.
- Facilitating access to education, training and employment opportunities.
- Providing family support.
- Providing advice on rent and arrears.

## The service aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- Development and maintenance of independent living skills.
- Development of budgeting skills and management of on-going household expenses, e.g. rents, council tax, fuel bills, food.
- Establishment and maintenance of social networks.

- Successful partnership working with a clearly defined network of agencies to support and develop our customers capacity to sustain their tenancies.
- Cultural & Language Issues.

## **Deciding when Support is Appropriate**

A referral for support services may not be appropriate if:

- The customer does not agree to engage with a suggested support service.
- A customer poses a risk in terms of the personal safety of Derwent Living or external agency staff.
- The customer's expressed needs do not reasonably fall within the scope of a support service.

## **Further Information**

Requests for further information about the service can be obtained from the Support Service co-ordinator.

## **Equality and Diversity: Equal Opportunities Policy**

We are committed to promoting Equal Opportunities in the provision of housing services and in the employment of staff and contractors, regardless of race, colour, nationality, ethnic and national origin, religion or belief, disability, age, gender, marital status or sexual orientation.

Our commitment includes Minicom facilities at our offices, trained sign language staff, disabled access and facilities at both our offices and work places. We also offer upon request:

- A translation service in written form, i.e. the Association's policies, and in the form of a three-way telephone conversation
- Documents recorded onto tapes
- Documents written in Braille

