



## Temporary Accommodation – when you're homeless

### **SCH, acting for Solihull Council, have a duty to provide you with temporary accommodation if:**

- You have nowhere safe to stay and we have reason to believe you may be eligible, homeless and in priority need or;
- We have accepted that we have a duty to secure housing for you, having been unable to prevent or relieve your homelessness within 56 days, and you are waiting for us to offer you a property.

We have access to a range of temporary accommodation options including self-contained units, shared supported accommodation, and hotel provision.

You are able to approach our service to request temporary accommodation 24 hours a day, 365 days a year through the Solihull Community Housing telephone line.

## What we will do

### **If we are providing you with temporary accommodation, before you move in we will:**

- Ensure the property offered will be clean, safe and secure.
- Carry out a safety check of every gas appliance, leaving the system in safe working order and meeting safety regulations.
- Inspect the electrical supply and carry out works in accordance with national standards.
- Provide essential items, including furniture and white goods (except hotel provision).
- Ensure that any private properties we use meets our required standards for health and safety.
- Inform you of our legal duty to provide you with temporary accommodation.

### **When offering accommodation we will:**

- Give you written details of the offer, including the address, property type and size, charges for use and occupation, the move in date, who the landlord is and any local information available such as schools and GPs.
- Offer suitable accommodation for your household, which will:
  - ✓ Be within the Solihull Borough (if it is safe for you to be in the borough). If this isn't possible straight away, we'll aim to offer this as soon as property becomes available.
  - ✓ Be in self-contained accommodation if you are a family. If this isn't possible straight away, we'll aim to do this within 6 weeks.

- ✓ Be affordable, we'll help you carry out a financial assessment, so you can afford to meet your housing costs.
- ✓ Be within reasonable travelling distance to your work, health or support services/family or schools.
- ✓ Advise you of your right to request a review of the suitability of the temporary accommodation. A decision should be made by the independent reviewer within 56 days.

### **When moving in we will:**

- Aim to keep your length of stay in temporary accommodation to a minimum.
- Give you a copy of your licence agreement, so you're aware of your responsibilities, and ours, and can refer to them anytime. We'll take time to help you understand your licence agreement, so that you can manage your temporary accommodation.
- If you need help or support, we will refer you to agencies that provide support services.
- Give you a choice of ways to pay your use and occupation charges on time. These are listed on our website at [www.solihullcommunityhousing.org.uk](http://www.solihullcommunityhousing.org.uk)
- Offer financial advice from our Money Advice Team who can help you pay your rent by assessing your income & expenditure, and offer assistance with benefits, including Universal Credit.

### **Looking after your accommodation and communal areas. We will:**

- Respond to your emergency repair requests within 24 hours.
- Make an appointment with you to carry out non-emergency repair works and complete these within our published timescales for repairs.
- Regularly monitor the cleanliness of communal areas, such as entrance halls, lifts, landings and stairs.
- Regularly carry out fire safety inspections of communal areas.
- Seek contact with customers who have not paid their Use and Occupation charge. A minimum of 3 formal letters will be sent to the licensee before formal possession proceedings are initiated.

### **Living in self-contained accommodation. We will:**

- Investigate breaches of your licence and work with you to address the problem.
- Refer you to agencies that may support you, if you need help to manage your licence.
- If you have fallen behind with your use and occupation payments, we will offer help with money advice and budgeting.

- Contact you promptly if you miss a payment and make affordable repayment agreements with you. A minimum of 3 formal letters will be sent before we initiate formal possession proceedings.

## Living in supported temporary accommodation

**We have a number of supported accommodation options for single homeless people. We have a contract in place for our support providers to:**

- Give you access to support from helpful staff members on a daily basis.
- Identify with you, any support needs you may have and discuss how best to respond to them.
- Review your support needs every 6-8 weeks.
- Offer you support to help you into employment or develop life skills through training and workshop event.

### **Fleeing Domestic Abuse. We will:**

- Offer you a referral to the Housing Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA), or the Women's Aid Temporary Accommodation Floating Support Worker for additional help, and emotional and practical support with plans towards your long term safety.

### **Rough Sleepers – If you have been rough sleeping or are at risk of rough sleeping we will:**

- Support you with emergency accommodation when night time temperatures go below zero degrees over 3 consecutive nights.
- Work with partners to support you into permanent housing by helping to connect with health services, drug or alcohol support, money advice or other services that may meet your needs, and re connect you with family or friends.

### **Moving between temporary accommodation units. We will:**

- Whenever possible, give you a minimum of 24 hours' notice if we need you to move from your current temporary accommodation to another.

### **We ask you to:**

- Be respectful and polite to our staff, we will always do our best to help you.
- Keep us informed of any changes to your personal details that may affect the services we provide to you.
- Let us know if you need extra help or support when you contact us. We aim to tailor our service to meet your needs.

- Keep to the responsibilities in your licence agreement.
- Report any property repair issues in a timely manner.
- Pay your use and occupation charges and contact us quickly if you fall into difficulties, we're here to help.
- Keep furniture and white goods in a good working order, and report any issues in a timely manner.
- Return your keys on time if you have secured a permanent home or if you have been asked to leave.
- Give us feedback about your experience with us to help us learn and improve our services.

## How will we keep a check on our Service Standards

### **We will:**

- Carry out quarterly audits of case work to check we are keeping our promises.
- We will regularly report how we are doing to our SCHape Residents' Panel – made up of customers who scrutinise our service.
- Use feedback from surveys, compliments, complaints and general comments to improve our service.
- How we will update you on how we are doing.
- In our Annual Report we will tell how well we have performed against our targets for managing temporary accommodation. Our target for 2020/21 is to:
  - ✓ Average stay in Temporary Accommodation all no longer than 112 days.
  - ✓ Average stay in Temporary Accommodation (budget Hotels) no longer than 10 days.

### **We will provide up-to-date information**

- about our services through our quarterly newsletter.
- on our website at [www.solihullcommunityhousing.org.uk](http://www.solihullcommunityhousing.org.uk)
- on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for you to see what we are up to.

## We will review our Service Standards

- Review our targets as part of our annual service delivery plan.
- Update our policies or review our services.
- When your valued feedback is telling us we need to look at things again.