

Safe Haven Sussex Referral Criteria

Who is the service for?

Safe Haven Sussex (SHS) provides supported accommodation for single individuals over 18 who are homeless, at risk of becoming homeless, or in temporary or insecure accommodation.

SHS is an inclusive service, supporting individuals from diverse backgrounds. We do not require that individuals referred to us have a local connection to Brighton and Hove and are therefore able to support those who may not qualify for housing via the local authority.

Our service is suitable for those who would be considered to have low to medium support needs and have sufficient independent living skills to manage in a house share with other residents. It is for those who would benefit from floating support and who understand that the support provided is an integral part of the service.

The service is suitable for individuals who are deemed to pose either no known risks to themselves or others, or a low risk where this can be managed by safety planning with the individual and with support from external agencies.

SHS houses are 'dry', i.e., no alcohol or drugs can be stored or consumed on the premises, and residents should not be substance affected in the accommodation. We ask that individuals have had a continuous period of at least 8 weeks free of problematic drug or alcohol use before they will be considered for the service.

We will always look to accommodate clients with impaired mobility and physical health needs where these needs can be met with reasonable adjustments and input from Adult Social Care. Unfortunately, most of our houses do not have level access, and facilities are often on different floors, so we may not always be able to meet the needs of individuals requiring these facilities.

Individuals referred to us must be in receipt of either Universal Credit or a legacy benefit so that they are eligible to claim housing benefit to cover the cost of rent.

What we provide

We provide safe, well-maintained, and fully furnished shared houses, ranging from 3-6 bed spaces in locations across Brighton, Hove and Hangleton.

We have a range of single and mixed gender houses and endeavour to give prospective residents a choice about where they would prefer to live. We take care in house matching, to ensure the right placement for the prospective resident.

SHS residents have their own front door key and lockable bedroom, and use of shared lounge, kitchen, and bathroom. Most of our properties also have a private garden.

We provide bed, mattress, bedding, chest of drawers, desk, and a welcome pack including cutlery. In the shared kitchens we provide appliances and white goods including washing machines, crockery, and utensils.

Residents are asked not to bring any large items of furniture or additional appliances, as there is not space for these in the houses and we are unable to offer storage.

The houses all have wi-fi and a TV license for the household.

How we help

Each SHS resident has a Support Coordinator, who provides weekly keywork at the house. Their role is to support residents to gain the skills and confidence for independence, and ultimately support them to move on when they are ready.

Through support planning, budget planning, and practical help and advice we aim to provide support that is tailored to the needs and goals of each resident, and that identifies and builds on their strengths. We sign-post residents to relevant specialist services, and we work in partnership with other professionals involved in their support.

The Support Coordinator will also facilitate house meetings with all the residents in each property to address any housing management issues that may arise, and support the residents to live with each other, mindful of each persons' comfort and wellbeing.

We also host monthly workshops for the whole service, where agencies give advice on seeking properties, budgeting, life skills, and communal activities are also held.

Welfare and Safety

In addition to the support provided by the Support Coordinators, our Welfare and Safety officers visit every house 6 nights per week to check all residents are safe and supported.

In the event of an emergency or an urgent issue, residents can always contact the Welfare and Safety Team on an out-of-hours number when the SHS office is closed.

Finance

The core rent is typically covered by housing benefit. If a resident starts working, they may face a housing benefit shortfall and would be expected to cover this from their earnings.

Residents over 25 pay £20 per week for service charge, whereas those under 25 and in receipt of Universal Credit pay a reduced rate of £10.

Utilities, TV license, Wi-fi and Council Tax are all organised by Safe Haven Sussex and covered by the Housing Benefit and Service Charge

Upon moving into the house, we request that the resident pays the first weeks' service charge up front (£10/£20) and £25 key deposit – the deposit is returned to the client when they leave the service

Moving on

There is no time limit on how long someone can stay in our service, however we actively promote and support clients to work towards moving on to independent accommodation.

Most SHS clients move on to private rented accommodation. Working alongside other agencies, we support clients to gain independent living skills, apply for funding for deposits and find landlords who will accept housing benefit.

We support clients to apply for social housing where they qualify for a banding via Homemove, but this is not a guaranteed route. As SHS is not commissioned by Brighton and Hove City Council, residents are less likely to qualify for Homemove banding. Referrers should consult the Council's social housing allocations policy for more details.

To help manage prospective residents' expectations, they should be advised that we are not a pathway to social housing and in most cases, the only viable move on route is into the private rental sector.