

# Process for On-boarding of Supported Living Accommodation in Essex



**2019**

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**Aim:**

This document sets out process for Supported Living accommodation for Adults in Essex who have a disability; this may be a Learning Disability and/or autism, a Physical Impairment or a Sensory Impairment.

Essex County Council (ECC) wants to support Adults to have access to housing which is of good quality, allows people to be part of their community and to have their support needs met the way they choose. Essentially, to be a base for the person to lead a life which is meaningful to them.

**The numbers:**

There are approximately 1,137 (as of Q2 2019) Adults with care and support packages funded by Essex County Council living in Supported Living accommodation and there over 360 Supported Living Schemes in Essex with the market continuing to grow.

**On-boarding:**

Essex County Council operate a Supported Living Scheme Approval Process (On-boarding) which all new Supported Living Schemes must fully pass through before the Scheme is listed as a void. This approach started in April 2017 and existing Schemes pre-April 2017 will also go through the same process when a void tenancy arises.

The purpose of this approval process is to ensure good quality and stable Schemes are available to as well as to support partner organisations to develop new Supported Living services to meet present and anticipate future demand.

**Background:**

Prior to the introduction of basic on-boarding checks and processes, there were several evictions of vulnerable Adults from Supported Living and some concerns about the condition of Supported Living accommodation. There was not a co-ordinated approach to deregistration of previous residential properties. Concerns about quality and sustainability of accommodation has led to the development of the on-boarding process which sets clear standards expected in Essex.

Supported Living has been around for some time. During this time the expectations of individuals, families and ECC around Supported Living has increased as the market has grown. We have also learnt along the way what is involved in developing a successful and progressive Supported Living Scheme and what has not worked so well.

The publication of the Reach Standards has helped shape ECC's expectations of the Supported Living offer in Essex.

## THE REACH STANDARDS

The REACH standards are a set of voluntary standards recommended by CQC (in 'Registering the Right Support' 2017) that introduce the fundamental principles of Support for LIVING.

They remain the only nationally recognized standards underpinning 'Supported Living'. The 9 standards are:

- I choose where I live.
- I choose who I live with.
- I have my own home (with a tenancy or ownership)
- I choose who supports me and how I am supported
- I choose my friend and my relationships
- I get help to make changes in my life
- I choose how to be healthy and safe
- I choose how I am part of the community
- I have the same rights and responsibilities as other citizens.

<https://paradigm-uk.org/what-we-do/reach-support-for-living>

### Benefits of Supported Living include:

- Own home or tenancy. Security of tenure.
- As a tenant or homeowner, the person has a right to choose who provides their support and can change support arrangements without moving home or move home without changing support arrangements.
- As a tenant or homeowner, the person has a right to choose who they live with - if anyone.
- Tenants and homeowners have the right to access the full range of welfare benefits, including Housing Benefit and both components of DLA or PIP.

[https://www.ndti.org.uk/uploads/files/Supported\\_Living\\_-\\_Making\\_the\\_Move,\\_May\\_2010.pdf](https://www.ndti.org.uk/uploads/files/Supported_Living_-_Making_the_Move,_May_2010.pdf)

## What is Supported Living?

Supported Living is housing for people with disabilities who want to live independently but may need some help and support.

### Supported Living housing can be:

- shared houses, usually with 2 to 4 tenants living together with their own bedrooms and sharing a communal space
- single occupancy units, where people have their own property within a group of other single occupancy properties

In this type of housing the Landlord and the support Provider are separate.

### Other accommodation options

**General needs housing** – Includes private renting as well as housing accessed through the local borough councils. Accessing council housing requires the individual to be resisted with the appropriate councils housing department. General need housing will be the first option considered for Adults with learning disability and Autism. Individual can still access support through a Personal Budget or domiciliary package if this is required.

**Shared Lives** – The Shared Lives Scheme supports eligible Adults aged 16 or over who need support to live on their own. It provides accommodation and support, or regular stays or visits with an approved carer. The Scheme matches the person needing care and support to a compatible Shared Lives carer.

**Extra care housing** - is for people aged 55 or over with care needs who want to stay independent. If individuals have a learning disability and/or Autism, there can be flexibility with the minimum age criteria. These properties provide 24-hour care and support onsite. To qualify for Independent living and extra care housing you need:

- to be aged 55 and over
- at least 6 hours of care and support each week
- to live in a district offering the Scheme or have a connection to that area

Local councils have their own eligibility criteria. Contact your local council for more information and advice.

**Residential care** – This care setting offers 24-hour care in a shared environment. Individuals do not have tenancies with the associated rights or choice of care Provider. Residential care is the last accommodation option considered. Residential care would only be considered for those with very complex needs once other options have been exhausted.

**Nursing Care Home** – The same as residential care above with the addition of nursing staff to meet health needs.

## Starting the Process

### For New Properties

- A Specialist Accommodation Lead (SAL) will be advised on a proposed property via Procurement Services. If the enquiry comes directly through to the SALs Team, Procurement Services will be informed and will advise the SALs if it is appropriate to proceed with the on-boarding process. Procurement Services may choose to invite potential Provider and or Landlord for commercial meeting if further information required by any party.

Proposed Schemes are at various stages readiness when a Provider and/or Landlord notifies Essex County Council (ECC) of the intention to develop a Supported Living Scheme. These can include:

- Developers making tentative enquires as to demand for services in an area,
- A Provider/Landlord may have a property they are thinking of purchasing,
- A Provider wishing to deregister a former or current residential care home for development into a Supported Living Scheme,
- Provider and/or Landlord have a property that they wish to have on-boarded as a Supported Living Scheme,
- Developers, Landlords or Providers have plans for a new build for a Supported Living Scheme,

ECC will want to understand the intended Scheme more and be able to support by way of guidance and advice. Developers, Providers and Landlords may want to know a little more about demand in Essex and what the expectations are prior to committing to going forward with development. Dependent on where the Scheme is geographically and in terms of development, will depend on next steps:

**Scheme not yet developed** – Developer/Provider/Landlord have an initial conversation with Procurement Services to determine if the proposed Scheme is something which is required in Essex. This is an opportunity to make early enquiries. It may be appropriate for a letter of support to be obtained through the Accommodation Planning Board (APB) process below.

**Development of a Scheme has begun or will be going ahead** - Developer/Provider/Landlord have an initial conversation with the Procurement Service. A meeting may be arranged to discuss more formally. Provider/Landlord may request a letter of support from Essex County Council through the on-boarding process outlined below.

**A building exists, and Provider/Landlord wish to on-board the property for use by ECC as a Supported Living Scheme** - Developer/Provider/Landlord have an initial conversation with the Procurement Service. This could include the de-registration of existing residential home. A meeting may be arranged to discuss more formally, or details of Scheme may be passed via the to the SALs to start the on-boarding process.

The earlier ECC is aware of the intention of a Developer, Provider or Landlord to create a Supported Living Scheme, the earlier we can work together. Joint working is crucial to support sustainable and high-quality accommodation and support options for the residents of Essex who require them.

- Once direction is given by Procurement Services the SALs will follow the process below in order to begin the on-boarding process. If a development is in very early stages, then a letter of support will be requested from the Accommodation Planning Board, with the proposed Scheme returning to APB later for on-boarding.

#### For Pre-Existing Schemes where a void has not previously been on-boarded

- Once a void notification is received for a void/property that has not already been on-boarded, SALs will follow on-boarding process below.

<https://www.livingwellessex.org/media/679979/Void-Notification-v8.docx>

## On-boarding, Scheme Approval process

1. SALs include details of potential Scheme on the Accommodation Pipe-line spreadsheet.
2. SALs check and record current demand in the area on the Accommodation Pipe-line spreadsheet.
3. SALs send covering standard letter via email with APB Form for completion by Landlord and/or Provider.
4. Landlord and/or Provider to complete form and return it to:  
[Specialist.Accommodation@essex.gov.uk](mailto:Specialist.Accommodation@essex.gov.uk)
5. SALs to confirm if the Scheme is needing a letter of support or looking to on-board. If only a letter of support is required, SALs to gain as much of the requested information that is currently available.
6. **Checks to be made on information required:**
  - a. SALs to check the Landlord for any Regulatory Judgements. Include details of any of these in the APB documentation. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulatory-judgements-and-regulatory-notice>
  - b. SALs to check Care Quality Commission website for current/proposed Provider rating. If rating is not 'Good' or above, or if the service has yet to be inspected, the process should be paused until it is confirmed the Provider has received at minimum a 'Good' rating. SALs to inform Provider that process has been paused due to this and ask them to send confirmation of a 'Good' rating when available to allow the process to resume. Alternatively, the property can be on-boarded with an alternate Provider commissioned via the framework.  
[https://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/20151023\\_provider\\_guidance-housing\\_with\\_care.pdf](https://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/20151023_provider_guidance-housing_with_care.pdf)

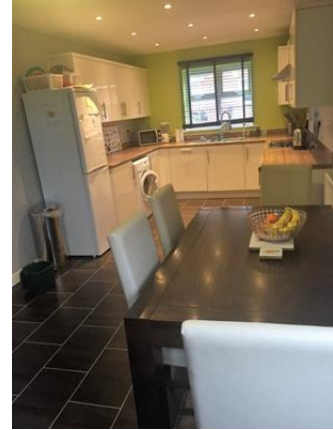
<https://www.cqc.org.uk>

- c. Procurement Services to confirm with SALs that an hourly rate for care has been agreed with the Provider and that it is in line with the framework.
  - d. SALs to check the tenancy to ensure there is not link between the Landlord and Provider, the tenancy is sustainable, and that the tenancy is fair. ECC is not ultimately responsible for checks of tenancy agreements, as those are still primarily the landlord's and tenant's responsibilities.
  - e. SALs check rent breakdown to ensure:
    - (Private Landlords) – core rent is within Local Housing Allowance (LHA) (subject to income); ineligible charges are reasonable and affordable and only related to the property.
    - (Social Landlords) – Provider to confirm they understand that Housing Benefit (HB) must cover all eligible rent and no top-up of rent to be required, subject to the Adult's income and benefit entitlement. SALs to check all ineligible charges are reasonable and affordable.
  7. SALs to confirm the Provider and/or Landlord wishes to proceed with the on-boarding process. If they do, continue to point 8. If they do not wish to proceed SALs to log decision on pipeline.
  8. SALs arrange a site visit. Attendance representation requirement as follows:
    - **New Scheme** – SAL, Operational Team manager, Commercial Manager as minimum. Commissioning Team to be informed of visit and invitation extended.
    - **New Scheme, proposed client group includes Complex needs\***– SAL, Complex Team Manager, Commercial Manager, Behavioural Advisor as minimum. Commissioning Team to be informed of visit and invitation extended.
    - **New Scheme, proposed client group includes people with additional physical requirements** – SAL, Operational Team Manager, Commercial Manager, Occupational Therapist as minimum. Commissioning Team to be informed of visit and invitation extended.
    - **Pre-existing void** – SAL, Operational Team Manager as minimum. Commercial Manager and Commissioning Team to be informed of visit and invitation extended.
- \* <https://www.livingwellessex.org/media/679662/Complexity-for-Learning-Disability-and-or-Autism-Supported-Living.docx>
9. On-Boarding visit takes place. SALs to follow up visit with an email to all attendees, including the Provider, summarising the discussion, including points raised during visit and follow-up actions that may be required to enable progression for presentation at APB.
  10. SALs complete APB paperwork, sends to ECC attendees of Schemes visit for confirmation of accuracy. Upon completion, SAL sends paperwork to the Operational Team Manager for Specialist Accommodation in readiness for next APB meeting.



**Some examples of standards of on-boarded properties:**

Shared housing



Self-contained flats



## Accommodation Planning Board

The Accommodational Planning Board meets Monthly. Its purpose is:

- To agree to on-board new Supported Living Schemes, which have been through the Scheme Approval Process, to ensure the Scheme fits ECC's quality and best value criteria.
- To decide if pre-existing Supported Living Schemes which have been through the Scheme Approval Process fit ECC's quality and best value criteria.
- To act as a forum for proposed Supported Living developments to be discussed, and if appropriate to be given a letter of support.
- A forum for the discussion of any Supported Living issues within the County and to share information among colleagues.
- To act as a reference group to support the development of the ECC Accommodation Strategy, ensuring the Board is working to ECC's strategic intentions.

### Essential care cost criteria:

The Provider delivering support at the scheme must operate within ECC's current hourly rates for Supported Living. As of April 2019, this is £15.16 per hour, £11.76 for night sleep, and £17.04 for complex support.

### *Rationale:*

ECC has applied an uplift to these rates for any providers who were paid a lower rate. This would make it very difficult to bring onboard any Essex-based Schemes charging a higher rate for support.

Essex is committed to considering an uplift each year.

### APB Terms of reference for further information:

<https://www.livingwellessex.org/media/679677/Accommodation-Planning-Board-Terms-of-Reference.pdf>

#### Possible outcomes from APB:

- Property/void on-boarded
- Property not on-boarded
- Property not on-boarded until outlined conditions met
- Further information required

Following APB:

1. SALs send letter to Provider advising of outcome of APB.
2. SALs add property (if on-boarded) to Void Sheet and promotes at the Living Options Forum and through a weekly email to Operational Teams.
3. Any questions following outcome of APB to be directed to the SALs ([Specialist.Accommodation@essex.gov.uk](mailto:Specialist.Accommodation@essex.gov.uk)) who will refer to the most appropriate person in ECC to respond.

**Out of board agreements:** There are occasions where properties may not be able to wait until the next APB to be on-boarded. In these rare instances, properties can be on-boarded outside of this meeting with the agreement of the chair of APB.

## Living Options Forum

The Living Options Forum meets Monthly. Its purpose is:

- To review the Supported Living and wider accommodation options for Adults with Disabilities that are open to Adult Social Care, Young people with disabilities and Children with Disabilities Teams who are nearing Adulthood and are linked to Essex.
- For the SAL to brief the Operational Team Manager as to who is waiting to be accommodated, highlighting those who have been waiting over 6 months or who may not need to remain on the Specialist Accommodation Waiting List (SAWL). Decisions to be made by Operational Team Manger about accepting people on the SAWL or them being removed.
- This is an opportunity for the SAL to raise with the Operational Team Manager any issues with receiving progress updates from practitioners and/or discuss any issues regarding people waiting accommodation or demand/supply.
- The Operational Team Manger can then take appropriate action and/or raise points for discussion at Accommodation Planning Board.

Living Options Forum terms of reference for further information:

<https://www.livingwellessex.org/media/679665/Living-Options-Forum-Terms-of-Reference.docx>

## Making the move into Supported Living

Compatibility is key when moving someone into an established shared household. Equally, when developing a new Scheme with a grouping of self-contained accommodation, it is key to get the grouping of tenants right. If this mix of tenants moving into Supported Living Accommodation is not right, it can adversely affect the quality and viability of the Scheme:

- **Incompatibility** can put tenancies at risk through anti-social behaviour, cause conflict and in worst case scenarios cause the individual, other tenants or care staff to be harmed.
- Not carefully considering the mix of tenants/potential tenants can mean **best value is not realised**. For example, an individual that has much lower needs moved in with Adults with higher needs. That individual would need to buy into to an equal share of core support they may not need. That tenancy could be used more effectively by someone with similar levels of need to current tenants.
- Placing individuals in an emergency or not fully considering need can mean a **Scheme is not financially sustainable**. This can be both for the Landlord and for Essex County Council (ECC). For example, if a person is moved into a shared house where in fact their needs are best met in self-contained accommodation, long term voids can be created. If individuals are incorrectly placed in shared accommodation it can mean other potential voids in shared houses can be very difficult, if not impossible to fill. This means Landlords may be unlikely to achieve the rental income they require long-term to make a Scheme viable. It also can mean ECC miss an opportunity for an individual to share an element of support with others around them due to them being placed in the wrong environment. Single, stand-alone packages may not be needed if individuals have options in the right setting. This may include a self-contained accommodation in a cluster of flats that enables them to have their own space and support, but able to share support at times where appropriate, possibly night-time support.

In order to support, co-ordinate and oversee the movement into Schemes, ECC have developed **Scheme link and lead roles**. This means that there is a named practitioner aligned to a Scheme who is the link person between individual social workers and Scheme Providers. Their role is primarily to be a single point of contact for those interested in a Scheme. They will have oversight of completability and the model of care for a Scheme. For more information please refer to guidance:

<https://www.livingwellessex.org/media/679668/Scheme-Link-and-Lead-Roles.docx>

### Steps to filling a void in a pre-existing Scheme:

- Following the Living Options Forum (LOF), worker reviews voids list and finds an on-boarded void and notifies the appropriate SAL and Scheme Link of interest in the void.
- Scheme link discusses Scheme with worker to ascertain if the Scheme may be suitable, drawing the workers attention to the Plotting spreadsheet and agreed tasks undertaken by

core. Compatibility and profile of Scheme discussed to see if it may be a viable option for an identified individual.

- Arrangements can be made for the individual/s and/or representatives to visit Scheme. **Please note that at this point no offer of placement can be given to the Adult as this will be dependent upon the proposed support package gaining validation, post plotting of needs. Remember that the provider does not assess the needs of the Adult. This is the role of the ECC worker. The provider assesses suitability of the Scheme.**
- The Adult selects the void they would like to pursue, and worker confirms that the Adult is aware that some of their needs will be met from within the core support provided at the Scheme.
- Worker notifies the SAL of the void being perused so that it can be marked as unavailable in principle on the voids list.
- Following visit, should there be more than one individual interested in void, relevant SAL to facilitate discussion with relevant Scheme Link and OTMs to decide which individual/s should be progressed to plotting for core and individual support. If it is not possible for Operational Team Managers (OTMs) to agree, then matter escalated to a service manager to support in resolving.
- Worker to plot support for the Adult should identified individual be considered suitable for Scheme. Worker to share proposed plotting with Scheme link and agree any changes required to their individual package and the other living in the Scheme.
- Draft plotting shared with OTM for the Scheme link.
- Worker placing someone new into Scheme has the responsibility to make sure that support hours work for the existing tenants. This may mean realigning core hours for others, raising any issues with Scheme Link.
- If plotting agreed in principle by Scheme link and OTM, it is then shared with the Provider linked to Scheme to consider and any amendments required are actioned.
- Plotting is then shared with the Adult(s) to agree the model of support and confirm that some needs are to be met from the core model. This must be recorded in the Adult(s) record for legal compliance.
- Worker to follow agreed process to secure appropriate resources for support should all parties (individual, ECC, core care Provider, Landlord) agree to proceed with filling of void.
- Worker to ensure that the breakdown of the total core hours is recorded in the Support Plan.

### Steps to filling a new Scheme:

- Information about new Scheme to be shared through the weekly void information circulation from SALs.
- Scheme Development Lead to draw up a plan for how the Scheme will be filled and who will need to be involved i.e. time scales, how will referrals be prioritised for suitability, how moves will take place (they may need to be staggered), how the Provider will assess suitability for the Scheme, how will transitions into the Scheme be managed.

- Scheme Development Lead and SAL to commence completion of a Scheme profile from information gathered.
- Scheme Development Lead, with support from relevant SAL, begins an expression of interest list for new Scheme as workers identify potential individuals. All identified individuals need to have a completed ANA form and have gone through LOF.
- If there are more people identified than there are tenancies, SAL to facilitate discussion with Scheme Development Lead and relevant OTMs to agree in principle who may be best suited to fill Scheme given need and consideration of compatibility.
- Where there is a lack of referrals, in consultation with the SAL, the Scheme Development Lead to consider how best to market the new Scheme to drum up interest Countywide. Individuals not yet taken to LOF can be added to the expression of interest list, providing that the case is then approved at the next available LOF, if the referral is to be progressed.
- Where ECC Capital funding is invested and a Provider not yet secured, via the Project meeting, the Scheme Development Lead to give an indication to Commercial of support hours and model of support for the Scheme to for inclusion in the tender for Procurement of Support Provider. This can only be an indication as support needs will go up and down as the Adult(s)' needs change through progression of living in Supported Living. Commercial to ensure that this is clearly indicated in the Procurement document.
- When potential individuals are identified by Scheme Development Lead and confirmed by them as potentially suitable, workers can arrange visits to site where appropriate. **Please note that at this point no offer of placement can be given to the Adult as this will be dependent upon the proposed support package gaining validation, post plotting of needs. Remember that the provider does not assess the needs of the Adult. This is the role of the ECC worker. The provider assesses suitability of Scheme.**
- Once individuals are identified and it is confirmed by workers they wish to proceed, Scheme Development Lead to co-ordinate relevant workers to plot needs, to create the core and individual hours model of support for the Scheme.
- Scheme Development Lead to share proposed plotting with relevant OTM for agreement in principle to proceed and the Plotting is then shared with the Provider to consider.
- Once the Provider has confirmed that they are able to meet the needs in Principle, Plotting is then shared with the Adult(s) to agree the model of support and confirm that some needs are to be met from the core model. This must be recorded in the Adult(s) record for legal compliance.
- Workers to follow agreed process to secure funding and commission support, should all parties (individual, ECC, core care Provider, Landlord) agree to proceed with filling of void. Move in dates to be agreed between the Landlord/Provider/Adult and the Worker.
- SAL/Scheme Development Lead to ensure that the Scheme Profile is finalised and saved for future marketing of any voids.

## Technology in Supported Living:

Assistive technology (AT) is a growing industry where ever more products are being developed to help people, including those with learning disabilities to live more independently whether they live in the community, Supported Living or a residential care setting. Technology is a growing part of all our lives, weather it be the way we use mobile devices, voice activated devices in our home or security systems. We are encouraging Supported Living Schemes to embrace technology as a means of supporting people to stay connected to their families and communities, support with independence and play a part in promoting safety and managing risk where appropriate. More information on technology that may be useful can be found in document attached.



LD Autism TEC  
catalogue final\_v2.p

## Moving on:

As part of an individual's development, it is expected that the support they receive enables them to increase their independence. As a result of outcome focused support, individuals may well progress to a level where they can progress to independent living, with or without support. The support that Providers are delivering, according to agreed outcomes, will be looked at during an individual's review. Where it is thought that support is either not fully being delivered, or that support provided is not meeting assessed need, Procurement Services may invite the Provider to a commercial meeting to discuss.

When an individual progress or moves on from Supported Living the Landlord needs to complete a void notification form. This allows for the tenancy to be reactivated on the voids list or will trigger the on-boarding process, should the tenancy not already have been on-boarded.

## Additional Documents

Property Inspection checklist – Self-contained Accommodation:

<https://www.livingwellessex.org/media/679985/Property-Inspection-checklist2.docx>

Property Inspection checklist – Shared House

<https://www.livingwellessex.org/media/679731/Property-Inspection-checklist-Shared-House-002-.docx>

Tenancy Checks for SALs

<https://www.livingwellessex.org/media/679674/Tenancy-Checks-for-SALs.docx>

LD and Autism TEC (Technology Enabled Care) Catalogue

<https://www.livingwellessex.org/media/682883/LD-Autism-TEC-catalogue-finalv2.pdf>

## Glossary

- **Adult:** An individual living at a Supported Living Scheme or a soon to be tenant at a Supported Living Scheme.
- **Core:** Care hours shared between 2 or more Adults at a supported living Scheme both in single occupancy units as well as shared houses.
- **Landlord:** responsible for the physical property.
- **Provider:** Agency providing care and support to the Adults at a Supported Living Scheme.
- **Supported Living Scheme:** available vacancies at a Scheme
- **Voids:** available vacancies at a Scheme

## Version Control

Version	Date	Change	Planned Review
1.1	07/08/2019	draft	
1.2	15/08/2019	Links to Living Well Essex	
1.3	30/08/2019	Update related to PSI	
1.4	25/09/2019	Updated Voids section	

This document will undergo a content review if any of the above processes change.