

Support for tenants in general needs stock Policy



Policy Statement

Bron Afon recognises that its tenants have a range of diverse needs and some tenants are particularly vulnerable, making it difficult for them to maintain a home successfully. This policy summarises our approach in supporting the needs of our tenants, to enable them to live as independently as possible within the wider community.

What housing related support we can provide

We recognise that providing support to tenants is crucial. This is reflected in one of our aims: "To provide support for people who need it".

There is a wide range of housing support services which we can provide to existing and new tenants, in order to help them manage their tenancy. There is also a wide range of specialist housing support and advice services provided by other agencies that we can refer or signpost our tenants to.

Accompanied viewing: At the time of viewing a property we will advise the tenant of any factors relating to the tenancy/property and surrounding area, which will assist them in making a decision on whether to accept the property.

Sign up procedure: This will include providing an explanation of the tenant's rights and responsibilities under the Tenancy Agreement; a copy of the Tenant's Handbook which contains relevant information and advice regarding the tenancy; information on what rent and other charges are due for the property; advising the tenant to take out contents insurance; assisting with the completion of a housing benefit and council tax benefit (if applicable) and council tax movement form.

New tenant visits: All new tenants are visited within 1 month of the start of their tenancy to discuss any relevant tenancy issues.

Part furnished tenancies: Furniture can be issued to tenants at a charge, to assist them with setting up their home or to replace furniture if necessary.

Rent management: Assistance is available to all tenants to ensure they are claiming housing benefit and also to offer support in the prevention of rent arrears.

Tenancy/estate management: Community Housing Officers can provide tenants with assistance in a wide range of tenancy/estate management issues.

Adaptations: Tenants who are disabled or having difficulties managing in their home can apply to have their home adapted to meet their housing needs.

Sheltered accommodation: Tenants who are 60 or over can apply to be re-housed into sheltered accommodation. This consists of self contained properties (flats, bedsits and/or bungalows) and the services of a 24 hour alarm response service and a Sheltered Housing Officer who will provide individual packages of housing support where there are assessed needs.

Working with our partners through the Supporting People Programme

As well as our own services, we will maintain a partnership approach with Torfaen County Borough Council and other agencies, to improve the quality, quantity and range of housing related support services in a co-ordinated and planned way through the Supporting People programme. We will also continue to be part of the strategic planning process for the Supporting People Programme through membership of the Supporting People Inclusive Forum.

Supporting People aims to provide and improve the quality of housing-related support services to vulnerable people to enable them to live independently, for as long as they wish or are able to do so. It is our belief that good quality, integrated housing related support can

help to prevent homelessness and tenancy breakdown; assist to reduce crime and fear of crime; help to reduce social exclusion and isolation, and reduce unnecessary and/or premature admissions to hospital, prison or other forms of institutional care. We will ensure our tenants are informed about how they can access services funded by the Supported People Programme.

Examples of the type of support funded through Supporting People are:

- Help to set up and maintain a home.
- Help to develop domestic, practical, social skills/manage behaviour.
- Help to develop basic living skills, e.g. budgeting, cooking, and paying bills.
- Help to manage finances and claim benefits.
- Providing emotional support.
- Help to access and sustain training, education and employment.
- Help to access other services, e.g. health, social care, legal, housing.
- Help to find more suitable accommodation and/or support services.
- Help in establishing personal safety and security (including community alarm systems).

The types of support referred to in this policy may be provided by:

- Sheltered Housing Officers - Tenants in Sheltered Housing have access to a Sheltered Housing Officer who will provide individual packages of housing support where there is an assessed need;
- Floating support schemes such as the Tenancy Support Service (TeSS) or Torfaen Mind - This is a service whereby support workers provide one to one, time limited support offering general and practical support to vulnerable tenants. The support is tailored to meet the needs of the tenant.
- Dispersed alarm services - This is an emergency response service via an alarm that is set up in a person's own home.

Involving service users in the Supporting People planning process

We will ensure that tenants receiving support are included in the Gwent Needs Mapping Exercise (GNME). The aim of this exercise is to gather housing and support needs information from service users about the services they require which will help to inform the annual Supporting People gap analysis and planning process.