

Getting other versions of this pack

We can give you this pack in other formats, such as:

- In large print
- In Braille
- On an audio CD

Please ask a member of staff if you need this.

Other languages: if needed, we can get a translated version of this pack. If the language that you need is not below, please contact the Support Team on 01325 388549.

اگر آپ کو یہ کتابچہ انگریزی کے علاوہ کسی دوسری زبان میں
درکار ہو تو برائے مہربانی ٹیلیفون نمبر 01325 388549
پر فون کر کے حوالہ نمبر بتائیں۔

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਤੋਂ
ਬਿਨਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ,
ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਨੰਬਰ 01325 388549 'ਤੇ
ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਅਤੇ ਰੈਫਰੈਂਸ (ਹਵਾਲਾ) ਨੰਬਰ ਦੱਸੋ।

यदि आप यह प्रकाशन अंग्रेज़ी के अलावा अन्य भाषा
में चाहते हैं तो कृपया संदर्भ नम्बर (रेफरन्स नम्बर)
बताकर निम्नलिखित 01325 388549 पर संपर्क करें।

如果你需要其它語言的版本，請與以
下電話聯係並報出參考號碼：01325 388549

যদি আপনার ইংরেজী ছাড়া অন্য কোন ভাষায় এই
প্রকাশনাটির দরকার থাকে, তাহলে 01325 388549
নম্বরে ফোন করুন এবং সূত্র নম্বর উল্লেখ করুন।

إذا رغبتم الحصول على هذه النشرة
بلغة أخرى غير اللغة الإنجليزية نرجو
الاتصال بنا على رقم الهاتف التالي
: 01325 388549 مع ذكر رقم الإشارة.



BRAILLE



Involving you

TENANCY SUPPORT SCHEME

Your information pack



Welcome to Tenancy Support

This pack tells you about what you can expect from us. The services we can provide and how we work to protect you while you are with us. The pack also tells you about the standards and commitment you can expect from us.

This pack is important. It has lots of useful information, so please keep it and any other information we give to you. The bag that we have given you with this booklet is yours to keep and store things in.

If you need more information about us or how we can support you, please ask our staff, who will be pleased to help. We will try to give you information in formats and languages that meet your needs, so please ask us if you need this.

I hope you enjoy your time with us.

Tenancy Support Team

Name: _____

Tenancy Support Officer: _____

Contact number: _____

How would you like us to sort out your complaint? Please write, if possible, what you would like to see happen.

How can we contact you?

Please write the most convenient times for us to contact you by telephone:

Times: _____

Your Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

A member of staff can tell you how to get support with filling in this form, or they can help you themselves if you want.

CONTACT DETAILS:

Post: FREEPOST DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL FEEDBACK

Telephone: (01325) 380651

E-mail: enquiries@darlington.gov.uk

Website: www.darlington.gov.uk/Generic/HaveYourSay/Have+Your+Say

Tenancy Support scheme

Our commitment to you

We provide short-term support for up to 2 years and promise to:



- support you, to help you achieve your goals;
- support, advise and represent you, if and when you need us to;
- treat you fairly and with respect;
- help you make choices and respect your right to make your own choices, as long as they do not involve criminal activity, interfere with other people's rights, or breach tenancy agreements;
- protect you from abuse, discrimination and harassment;
- trust and believe in you;
- maintain your safety and dignity; and
- meet our legal responsibilities to you.
- help you pay your rent regularly.

Our expectations of you

We expect you to:

- respect everyone who uses our service or works with you;
- respect the policies and procedures of the service;
- work with us so that we can support you appropriately;
- tell us when we could do things better.

Local Services

We will give you information about local services that you may need, such as:

- benefits offices, doctors, dentists, hospitals, job club, probation services, refugee services, children's services and social services;
- libraries, leisure centres, colleges, bus routes, railway station and post offices;
- information services including legal advice, citizens' advice bureaux, tenants' association, housing advice centres and money advice centres;
- places of worship that recognise your spiritual and religious beliefs;
- groups and organisations that can offer specialist advice, support and information related to your interests, needs and cultural background; and
- places and groups involved with your leisure interests, and places to meet people and socialise.

Complaints form

Service users have the right to expect the highest standards from Darlington Borough Council Tenancy Support Scheme.

We welcome complaints, because they give us the chance to improve the quality of our services.

You can use this form to make a complaint if necessary. If you would like to see the complaints procedure in full, ask a member of staff for a copy.

Your name _____

Your address _____

Postcode _____

Your telephone number _____

What is your complaint?

Please describe your complaint, giving as much information as possible and including dates where relevant. Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary and attach it to this form.

Please turn over →

How does Darlington Borough Council Tenancy Support Scheme make sure staff are able to protect children from abuse?

- We check all staff when we first employ them to make sure they do not have a record of harming children.
- We will train all staff in the things they can do to protect children, and in the things they must do if they believe a child is being harmed or abused.
- All staff have to follow a code of conduct. This code tells them how they must behave when they are working or in contact with children.

Other useful contacts

The Samaritans. Their website is www.samaritans.org.uk or phone them on 08457 90 90 90.

Our support

How we support you

We will work with you to agree and regularly review your support plan. The support plan reflects your needs, aims and goals, and what we offer. We will provide you with a support worker who will:

- meet you within a week of you joining our service;
- agree your support plan with you, based on what you need and hope to gain from the service, and what we offer;
- meet you at times you both agree; and
- keep notes of your meetings.

Our service standards

We aim to use professional staff with appropriate skills and regular training to provide our services. We will:

- provide services that are based on professional support skills;
- make sure our staff are properly supervised and managed;
- make sure our staff follow our code of conduct; and
- make sure we check with the Criminal Records Bureau whether our staff have any criminal convictions.

The support we offer

We offer support in the following areas.

Financial

- Claiming welfare benefits, budgeting, paying your bills and saving.

Skills for life

- Filling in forms, shopping, getting around, and managing your time.

Finding and applying for work, training or education

- Finding out about training and work education opportunities
- Filling in application forms and preparing for interviews
- Preparing for work, training or education

Finding suitable housing

- Finding out about housing opportunities
- Filling in application forms
- Preparing to move.

Household skills

- Developing domestic skills, like using a washing machine, cooking, cleaning, washing-up and ironing
- Learning how things work in a house, such as the water supply, electricity fuse box, gas supply and central heating controls
- Developing household skills, such as decorating, gardening and changing light bulbs.

Health and personal hygiene

- Including diet, medication and contraception.

Social skills

- Using your leisure time
- Assertiveness, confidence, dealing with conflict and managing anger
- Making choices and solving problems
- Communication and making friends.



We will only discuss the information with other members of staff who need to know. We will not discuss the information with other service users.

We will support you if you need to talk to social services.

What can I do if I am concerned that a member of staff is harming or abusing a child, or if I am being abused by a member of staff?

You can contact your local social services department for advice and help. Or, you can contact:

- Childline on 0800 1111; or
- The NSPCC child protection helpline on 0808 800 5000.

What will social services do if they are told that a child may be being harmed or mistreated?

Social services will decide what must be done to protect a child from more harm.

Social services may need the help of others. This could include the police, parents or carers and our staff.

Social services may want to ask you questions about what you have heard or seen.

What does child protection mean?

Child protection means protecting children from abuse. Below is a list of some of the things which could mean a child is being abused.

- Physical abuse - hitting, kicking, slapping, or forcing a child to take medicines when they don't need them.
- Emotional abuse - threatening to abandon or harm a child, or saying things to hurt and humiliate a child.
- Sexual abuse - forcing or coaxing a child to take part in sexual activities, for example, touching, sexual intercourse, taking sexual photographs of a child or showing them sexual images. (Sexual activity with someone under 16 is illegal).
- Neglect - when a child's basic needs such as food, warmth, health, comfort are not met.
- Bullying - pushing, pinching, hitting, name-calling and unwanted physical contact.

Protecting children



Why is this important?

We all have a responsibility to protect children from harm and abuse.

All children have the right to be protected from abuse. An Act of Parliament called the Children Act 1989 makes social service departments and the police responsible for investigating cases where children are mistreated.

How does Darlington Borough Council help to protect children from abuse?

We believe that all children should be treated with dignity and respect. We also believe that we should help to protect children from harmful or abusive behaviour. We have a policy called 'Protection from abuse'. It tells staff what they must do;

- to try and protect all children they have contact with; and
- if they are told about a child who is being harmed, badly treated or sexually abused.

The policy will help to protect any child (up to the age of 18) who staff have any contact with.

What should I do if I think a child is being harmed or abused?

It can be difficult to tell someone that you think a child is being harmed, neglected or abused in some way. But, if you know of a child who is, you should tell a member of staff immediately,

They will listen to you and write down what you have said. They will give this information to their manager. The manager may discuss the information with someone from social services.

If the information you have given us suggests that a child is in immediate danger, we may call the emergency services.

Access to specialist counselling or therapy

We cannot provide specialist counselling or therapy, If you would like this, please discuss it with your support worker who will support you in finding out what services you can use, and help you find available specialist organisations such as those offering counselling in:

- alcohol or drug problems;
- legal issues;
- bereavement
- physical abuse;
- sexual abuse;
- relationships; and
- lesbian and gay issues.

Having your say about what goes on

We will listen to, respect and respond to your views as we work with you. We offer different opportunities for people to have their say. Your information pack tells you about current opportunities in your service.

They include:

- community meetings;
- one-to-one meetings with your support worker and other staff;
- regular reviews;
- surveys and questionnaires;
- meetings and events;
- our complaints procedure; and
- involving an independent advocate or representative.

Independent advocacy or representation

You may want someone outside our service to represent you or make your views known to others. Your information pack should contain information about local advice and advocacy services that can do this. Your support worker and other staff can support you to find an independent representative, or advocate.

Your commitment to working with us

You are with our service because we agreed between us that you need the support we offer. To make the most of our support, it is important that;

- you meet regularly with your support worker; and
- if you need to change or postpone an appointment, you make every effort to let your support worker know beforehand and arrange another appointment.

If you repeatedly miss meetings, or if you refuse to meet your support worker or accept their support, we will review with you whether you need the kind of support we offer. Your support worker will discuss this with you. You may want to involve someone else - from the service or outside. We aim to help you achieve your goals and provide the support you need to do that. This support may include using other services.

Your rights to see information in your file

You can see any information we hold about you in our files, except when the information;

- has been provided by someone on a confidential basis;
- would identify someone who has complained about you; or
- would put you or someone else at risk.

If you want to see your file, you can ask a member of staff to arrange this. You will need to give us 48 hours' notice.

What does abuse mean?

There are many types of abuse.

- Physical abuse - hitting, kicking or slapping you, offering you drugs or withholding medicines.
- Psychological abuse - threatening to leave you or not to look after you, or saying things to hurt and humiliate you.
- Sexual abuse - forcing or encouraging you to take part in sexual activities including touching, sexual intercourse, rape or taking photographs or other computer images of sexual activity.
- Neglect - neglecting your basic needs such as food, warmth, health and comfort.
- Financial abuse - not allowing you to have any money of your own causing financial difficulties, or theft causing anxiety and worry and deterioration in your physical and emotional health.
- Discriminatory abuse - physical attacks such as pinching, hitting, name-calling, racial or sexual comments or jokes, unwanted physical contact, or not giving you support or specific services.
- Institutional abuse - when big organisations deny you your right to choose, take risks or make decisions, or prescribe too much or too little medication. These institutions, like housing associations or psychiatric hospitals are often set up to house, treat and look after people who are vulnerable because of their mental health or learning difficulties.
- Domestic violence - happens when one partner in a relationship is abusive towards the other person. It can happen in heterosexual, gay or lesbian relationships, between people of any age, race, physical ability or class. Acts of domestic violence include sexual, physical, discriminatory and psychological abuse, as well as neglect.

What should I do if I think someone is being harmed or abused?

We know it can be difficult to tell someone that you are being harmed, or that you think someone else is being harmed.

If you know of someone who may need help, you should tell a member of staff immediately. Staff will listen to you and write down what you have said. They will pass that information on to their manager who will want to find out if you need help, support or information from staff.

The manager will ask you whether you want them to tell the police or social services. They will not contact the police or social services if you don't want them to.

If another person is also at risk of being harmed or hurt, the manager will need to let social services or the police know this, and also what has happened to you.

Staff will discuss the information with other members of staff only if they need to know. Staff will not discuss your concerns with other service users.

What should I do if I, or another person who is vulnerable, are being harmed or abused by a member of staff?

You can contact your local social services department.

Or you can get help or advice from the following organisations.

- Samaritans: phone 08457 90 90 90 or visit their website at www.samaritans.org.uk

MindinfoLine offers confidential help on a range of issues which relate to mental health. Phone 0845 766 0163.

What will social services and the police do?

They will want to make sure that you and others are safe. They will want to make sure you understand the risks and dangers to yourself and others. Social services and the police may need to talk to your parents, carers or representatives and our staff.

Keeping your personal information confidential

You can keep any personal information about yourself private, unless and until you want to tell us about it. However, your support worker can't help you with issues she or he doesn't know about.

We will keep personal information about you confidential and share it only with your support worker, the immediate staff team who work with you and their managers, except:

- if we suspect someone else is at risk, for example, a child or adult who is vulnerable;
- if we think you are involved in illegal activity such as terrorism, illegal drugs or drug use on the premises, stolen property or benefit fraud;
- if we have to release information under the terms of a court order;
- if we suspect a crime has been committed by you, or against you, or where you may have evidence about a crime;
- if we believe that there is a risk to you or to others;
- if we believe that you are seriously physically or mentally ill and that it is in your best interests to get help;
- at your request or with your permission;
- to an advocate you have asked to represent you and given your permission to see the information we hold.

Moving on

Option and choices

Your support worker will give you information about your options for support when you leave the service.

Your support worker will discuss these options with you and support you, to help you move on when you want to.

If you and your support worker disagree about whether or when you are ready to move on, you can discuss this with the manager of the service.

We will support you after you have left by welcoming you back to the service on visits and by staying in touch.

If things aren't working

If you are not happy with your support worker

If you feel you cannot get on with your support worker, or if you find it hard to communicate or you need support that your support worker can't provide, you should first try to sort out things with her or him.

If this doesn't work, you can contact the manager of the service to discuss why you are not happy and what you can do next. Their contact details are in your information pack.

Finding other support

You may decide that you do not want the support we offer, or that we cannot provide the support you need.

We will always discuss your views with you.

Making a complaint

This booklet contains details of our complaints policy. If you have not seen a copy of the complaints policy, you can ask your support worker for one.



Protecting adults

Why is this important?

We believe it is wrong to abuse anyone. This section tells you how we can help an adult who may be at risk of harm. We believe that everyone should be:

- treated with dignity and respect;
- allowed to make their own choices; and
- given the support and information they need to make decisions.

How does Darlington Borough Council help to protect me?

Our 'Protection from abuse' policy says how we will help service users who are in danger of being harmed or abused.

This will help to protect any adult (aged 18 or over) who staff work with, or have contact with, while at work. It tells you what action we will take if you, or another adult, are being harmed, or if you think someone may want to harm you. The policy tells staff:

- how to help to protect anyone who is being harmed or may be at risk of being harmed;
- what they must do if they know that you, or another adult, are being harmed, treated badly or sexually abused; and
- how they must consider and respect your wishes.

How does Darlington Borough Council make sure staff can protect me from abuse?

- Before we employ anyone, we will check with the Criminal Records Bureau that they do not have a record of harming people.
- We will train all our staff in the things they can do to protect you, and in the things they must do if they believe you, or another adult, are being harmed.

- make sure that we employ staff from a range of backgrounds;
- regularly review how we deliver our services; and
- have policies and procedures which are easy to understand.

Do you want to know more about diversity?

If you want to know more about diversity or get involved in one of our local or regional diversity projects, please speak to your support worker.

Are you happy with the services you are receiving?

Tell us if:

- you think you have been discriminated against by staff or people who use our services;
- you think the service we provide do not take account of your needs;
- you think our policies or procedures are difficult to understand; or
- you do not think you have been involved in developing your individual support plan.

We will listen and put this right

You can either speak to your support worker or speak to the tenancy manager.

If you still think you are not being heard and that you would like to make a complaint, you can follow our complaints procedure.

You will find a complaints form in this booklet. Or, you can ask a member of staff for a separate copy of the complaints leaflet.

If you want to see our diversity policy, please ask your support worker.

Confidentiality

What is confidentiality?

Confidentiality is about how we use information from you and about you in a respectful way, to protect your rights and help provide effective support.

What does it mean for me?

Confidentiality means that you can talk to your support worker, or another staff member. It also means you can trust that person to be careful with the information you give them and make the right decision about what to do with the information.

It means we won't tell anyone else what you tell us unless we absolutely have to. The same applies to anything you tell us on a form, letter or e-mail.

Keeping information about you confidential

We will only pass on the information that you give us to anyone outside the organisation in the following circumstances:

- You give us permission. If we think it would help to give you the best possible service, we will ask you to give us permission to share information with other organisations or people. We will ask you to sign a form agreeing to us sharing the information. You can withdraw your permission at any time, although that may mean we have to look again at how we provide a service for you.
- The information is about a crime or illegal activity, or if a court orders us to.
- We are worried that you might come to harm from someone else, or hurt yourself or someone else.
- An organisation with a legal responsibility asks us for information, for example, Housing Benefit, social services and the probation service.

We will not discuss your details with anyone else who uses our services.

If you ask us to investigate a complaint, we will check with you first what information you want us to discuss with other people.

Can I see what's on my personal file?

Yes, you can ask to look at your file in front of your support worker or another staff member. We will aim to give you an appointment within 48 hours of you asking.

Other people who use our services cannot look at your file.

If you would like a copy of any information you see on your file, ask the staff member who is with you when you look at it. They will copy the papers you want for you.

If someone else has given us information about you, we cannot show it to you unless they give us their permission

If you are not happy about any information we have about you on your file, please discuss it with your support worker or another staff member. If you are not happy with what they do about it you can make a formal complaint. Please see the complaints information in this booklet that tells you how to do this.

We must keep the information we have on your file even after you have left our services. Our rules about confidentiality still apply to the file.

Data protection

The Data Protection Act means that we keep all the information we have about you securely and use it in line with the law. This applies to written and computer records.

For more information

If you want to talk to someone in confidence, or see your personal file, please ask your support worker or another member of the tenancy support team.

Do you know about diversity?

What is 'diversity'?

Diversity is about having a mix of people who work together to create an environment which respects and values people's differences,

Our commitment to diversity

- We will provide services that are sensitive to your needs and wishes.
- We will respect your culture and beliefs
- We will try to make sure our services are safe and free from discrimination.
- We will work towards including everyone.

Our diversity policy

Our diversity policy is a way of showing our commitment to you.

Our policy recognises that you may experience discrimination because of your age, disability, sexuality, religion, background, race, culture and beliefs.

We also understand that you can be discriminated against because of your health, support needs, lifestyle or living situation.

Our diversity policy makes sure we provide service to you which respect and value differences and which are free from discrimination.

What's in our diversity policy?

In our diversity policy we promise that we will aim to:

- talk to, involve and listen to the views of the people who use our services and the communities we work in;
- provide services that are sensitive to your needs and wishes;
- provide services which reflect the people who live in the communities we serve;
- make sure our services get to the people who need them.