

MOVE ON GUIDANCE



Housing Justice
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Introduction

This guidance can be used solely as a guidance resource to help the move on process in your night shelter, and shows the structured process if needed of how The Housing Justice Move on coordinator will work with shelters.

The guidance laid out in this document aims to help, guide and advise shelters to undertake a move on approach and is not the only way to help guests move on into their own accommodation.

Move on ready criteria focuses on individual guests being stable enough to deal with move on and maintain their accommodation. The onus is on stability rather than support needs, as long as they can maintain the accommodation safely and have necessary tenancy sustainment skills.

- Rather than move on ready criteria being based upon surface support needs, i.e. substance use or mental health needs, as these maybe manageable. But on someone's ability to safely maintain accommodation and typically guests with low-medium support needs.

If your shelter feels they would like to, then please discuss any aspect around someone's move on readiness and options with the Housing Justice Move on coordinator. This guidance is aimed at night shelters who have little or no experience moving people on and isn't the only approach.

The structure of the move on process guidance creates a bespoke move on plan balancing a guest's realistic move on options with their own needs and available resources.

If you have managed to work through the elements and stages in this guidance and managed to help someone move into their own home, you have given someone the greatest gift they could ever receive.

The assessment is broken down into four sections and in practice will need to be completed over a period of time:

1. **Personal Details**
2. **Assessment and Referral**
3. **Budgeting Information**
4. **Practical and Personal Support Plan**

It is widely acknowledged that a strengths based approach focusing upon people's positive strengths creates a comfortable space to be honest and not dwell on past misfortune and mistakes. Helping someone to acknowledge where he or she is actually at and building compassionate confidence.

The guidance could be used as a training resource in shelters, and the housing justice move on coordinator upon request can come to your shelter, and offer 2 hour training and one to one coaching. A suggestion could be to spend 20 minutes for a week in pairs, practicing role-playing being on both sides to build confidence becoming familiar with the structure and questions.

Ideally it is best to complete as much information from existing records as possible, and either record the answers during the session on pen and paper and later type up or extend the text box size before printing, neatly write notes by hand during the session and scan the document.

- Once you are familiar with the flow of the assessment and feel confident, you can jump back and forth between sections to follow the natural flow of the conversation.

Some of the questions are of a personal nature and it's natural to feel uneasy when asking someone if they have self harmed or attempted to take their own life. It's OK to be nervous and to be honest with the guest, saying to the guest, if you feel appropriate, that you feel a little nervous. Being honest with positive regard creates an easy and supportive environment to help cushion asking such intrusive questions.

Please bear in mind how some responses a guest gives during the assessment might contradict or give insight into other responses in different sections of the assessment.

- An example might be someone saying they drink 4 cans a day but not covered in their budget or someone having good coping mechanisms for when feeling down but when talking about alcohol they disclose they binge when feeling down. It is OK to go back and refer to these without judgment and an open heart, reminding guests it's OK and we just want to make sure they get the right help.

It is advisable to spend time becoming familiar and thinking through the assessment stages and the guidance or to practice the assessment with colleagues in advance or seek support if needed from the Housing Justice move on worker.

The following sections outline practical guidance for each section of the assessment.

1. Personal Details

Covers basic information needed to start a move on process, their recent route into losing accommodation, linked support needs and relevant historical info and a data declaration to sign if using to refer to Housing Justice Move On coordinator, which needs the night shelter's name included on the dotted line and signed by both the guest and shelter representative. This section includes basic financial overview, which will inform move on options available and please include what ID they have, as will be asked later for copies as part of potential tenancy sign up.

- It is recommended to complete as much info before the meeting as possible, and maybe on the referral into your shelter already. Then please go through briefly with the guest to confirm.

Keep the guests informed and involved throughout the process and explain this is the first stage of looking at possible suitable move on. Please be sincere and present when undertaking this process and be honest and realistic and not making any promises.

Enquire if the guest has a CHAIN number, which means they have been verified as rough sleeping by outreach teams and recorded on a database. They will have enhanced opportunities and allocation options into specific social housing across London, which provides floating support and managed through the clearing house system. The housing justice move on coordinator, can verify if a guest has a CHAIN number via the database and make a referral to be assessed for a clearing house property.

2. Assessment and Referral

This section covers personal details and will give a picture around someone's readiness for move on. Please follow the golden rules if new to conducting assessments, seek support, practice them in advance, and be sincere and present throughout. The questions on the form are self-explanatory and best used as prompts to form a conversation in your own way and style keeping it relaxed and authentic.

- Going through these questions requires honest sensitivity and also brings an opportunity to get both yourselves and the guests thinking about the realistic aspects of a move, such as what items they may need to make somewhere habitable like a bed and bedding etc.

The questions are designed so that one response might contradict another response in the previous question. An example might be the section requesting 'Previous history managing own home, work life balance and finances' might add further insight into their 'Origin route into homelessness' information. Please be mindful of how questions and responses are set out to get an accurate picture and tease things out into the light. Another example could be how someone's own assessment of their physical well being might be different to what they said about their physical health in an earlier question. It is OK to be honest and broach this with the guest and amend any previous sections.

- Please refer back to any sections you see fit if relevant information comes up during the conversation at any stage.

This may be pertinent once you progress onto the budgeting section and if information in this section requires reviewing. Please discuss any areas you would like to talk through with the Housing Justice move on coordinator if needed, who will be able to provide face-to-face support in your shelter if needed.

Guidance for people in employment would be to enquire about employment sustainability issues, and if likely to lose their job or not have any work in the foreseeable future, which will be factored into stability for

move on. If someone has mental health or physical support needs please ask where receiving on going support and what it entails.

- Please pay attention to someone's diet and their alcohol intake, as a good diet can promote stability even when drinking excessively.

When asking questions about personal sensitive things, like if they have made attempts to take their own life, and become defensive saying "Why are you asking me?"

- An example response maybe "We are here to try and look after as many as we can and sometimes we do see people who do sadly feel low and want to take their own life, we need to know who to help, we are very sorry to ask you. We ask everyone incase we miss someone who we could have changed what might have been. We are mostly voluntary and most not paid, and we don't want to pry, we are only trying our best. Your help and patience to understand that this question isn't aimed specifically at you, but to say the 1 in 20 we could reach out and catch."

Potentially this could turn a guest's defensive response into a tone of solidarity or either open them up to make a disclosure. Above all having honest intent and being present, helps you broach and work through these situations.

Please also use a common sense judgment and balance the observations of the guest in the shelter and their responses to questions to understand a realistic view.

- An example maybe, they say they don't drink very much but you see them under the influence consistently at the shelter. Please use emotional intelligence when feeding back to the guest and be mindful that being homeless is very stressful and doesn't give anyone the basic platform to feel secure.

Some observations around support needs might just be short term coping strategies used during a time of immense stress and a period of profound personal uncertainty. But being honest with the guest to promote realistic understanding of their needs brings long term benefits.

These parts of the assessment will build a picture as to what the guest will be able to both manage and practically what type of property be able to realistically achieve.

If you would like there is the option of sending over any completed assessments to the Housing Justice move on coordinator to discuss anything regarding the guest's circumstances.

It is possible to make a referral to a Tenancy sustainment support service in their home if the guest needs more support maintaining their tenancy. This can be done via the Housing Justice Move On coordinator and will get one to one support from St Mungo's in North London and Thames Reach in South London.

3. Budgeting Information

This section is for a proposed property; and a budget projected for the new target accommodation. The questions are self-explanatory and can be referred back to and changed as the on going move on work progresses moving forward. We need to understand what the guest's current income is and other relevant information like type of employment, benefits and to request proof of payslips or benefits and bank account and recorded as evidence.

Please complete section 1 and put the take home pay amount at the top on the dotted line next to the heading 'Take home pay', either employment or benefits. This section should be undertaken before any property search, to understand if can afford a property and what areas to start the search.

Some of the budgeting amounts will be known while in the shelter like travel and debt repayments etc, initially include an average figure for the cost of things like utilities based on a 1 bedroom/studio flat.

- A basic web search will give useful ballpark figures for things like utilities and council tax. This will build a draft budget to help hone in on a realistic affordable geographical area to search for properties.

If the guest is in receipt of benefits and eligible for housing benefit or universal credit to cover the rent you can request for Alternative Payment Arrangement (APA) that pays the rent direct to the landlord. This can be done via universal credit online or their telephone help line. In relation to housing benefit and knowing if will meet the rent, please visit the council's website to understand what amount will receive in benefit for which property covering both size and location in that borough.

- This is called the local housing allowance (LHA) and specific to each borough, an example is Bromley below;

Bromley Broad Rental Market Area (BRMA) April 2019	Inner South-East London (144) Calendar week	Outer South-East London (151) Calendar week
<i>Shared accommodation</i>	£98.04	£86.80
<i>1 bedroom</i>	£215.51	£170.83
<i>2 Bedroom</i>	£281.45	£210.17
<i>3 bedroom</i>	£340.64	£257.15
<i>4 bedroom</i>	£429.53	£322.15

- Hackney, example below, showing different rental market levels across two contrasting inner and outer London boroughs.

Hackney Broad Rental Market Area (BRMA) April 2019	Inner East London	Inner North London	Central London
<i>Shared accommodation</i>	£108.30	£106.89	£144.84
<i>1 bedroom</i>	£273.02	£276.51	£276.51
<i>2 Bedroom</i>	£320.74	£320.74	£320.74
<i>3 bedroom</i>	£376.04	£376.04	£376.04
<i>4 bedroom</i>	£442.42	£442.42	£442.42

If someone is under 35 they will only get the LHA shared accommodation rate as maximum housing benefit or universal credit. Someone over 35 will be able to claim maximum housing benefit for an amount within the LHA for that area.

- However if someone both under and over 35 years old, has stayed in your shelter for 3 months, and can advocate they are receiving resettlement support from the shelter. Then potentially, under 35 will be entitled to 1 bedroom LHA rate, and over 35 exemption from LHA rate.

A case will need to be made for an exemption, and advice and support is available from Housing Justice move on coordinator, local law clinic and Local authority Housing benefit office.

- Other exemptions for under 35's LHA shared room rate are shown below;
 1. *Care-leaver under 22 (exemption ends when you reach 22);*
 2. *Get middle or higher rate Disability Living Allowance and no-one gets Carer's Allowance or the Carer Element of Universal Credit for looking after you;*
 3. *Get standard or enhanced Daily Living Component of Personal Independence Payment and no-one gets Carer's Allowance or the Carer Element of Universal Credit for looking after you;*
 4. *Get Armed Forces Independence Payment and no-one gets Carer's Allowance or the Carer Element of Universal Credit for looking after you;*
 5. *At least 25 and spent three months or more in a hostel (or hostels) for homeless people and provided with support and meals or cooking facilities;*
 6. *At least 25 and are an ex-offender subject to multi-agency management;*
 7. *Need a spare bedroom and regularly receive overnight care from a carer who does not normally live with you;*
 8. *Have a spare bedroom and have a foster child or young person living with you.*

In the section 'Take home pay', please write on the dotted line section what income they are receiving and expenditure information to be added to the 'Expenditure item cost' titled box i.e. council tax £70 and electricity £50.

Then in the columns below deduct each expenditure item against the descending income showing a reducing amount to show how much money is left for other things as progress.

- There are certain none negotiable factors, like rent and council tax, and may need some trimming and supportive budgeting around other less essential elements.

Once identified an area and budget to begin your search for a property, do an online search of estate and letting agents and call them and ask if they have properties within the price range and if appropriate accept Housing benefit or universal credit.

- This may require some tenacity, and advisable to create a networking list of contact details and if viable contact.

When viewing a property a check for general state of repair including any appliances included i.e. fridge, cooker etc. What the heating is and take any meter readings, you can request the Housing Justice move on coordinator to accompany you on any visits if feel needed.

When found a property and know the relevant expenditures like rent and utilities please review and edit the final budget, to reflect the actual cost of maintaining that property. The 'Take Home pay' section will have reducing amounts taking into account the relevant expenditure items and be an actual budget linked to the actual property and then show what money is left.

This budgeting section on the whole sounds more complicated than it is in practice, please remember to take each stage as it comes and focus on the pieces and the individual elements and it will all fit together as each part is completed.

4. Practical and Personal Support Plan

This section is to create a support plan suited to that guest's particular needs for when they have moved into the accommodation. The questions are self-explanatory and will require some internet research, an example would be planning someone's route to work, on the TFL website and understanding travel time and cost. This section requires understanding what someone's needs are, based on the previous information, and being creative coming up with a list of local resources to help meet them.

- Try and get the guest to do some or all of this stage himself or herself then come back with their input directly on the form.

When looking at resources and support options online it might be useful to check the distance in relation to the guest's new address as some London boroughs cover vast geographical distances. A suggestion maybe for the guest to call a potential support resource in advance, an example maybe calling the local food bank and confirming the opening times and eligibility or a local church housing advice drop in, to understand what they offer. Many boroughs have housing advice services to help around any potential tenancy sustainment issues that may crop up down the line. Check out the local supermarkets and their proximity, discount supermarket chains like Lidi and Aldi can make a significant difference financially and towards their health and well being.

- Please keep diet and food on the agenda as contribute towards mood, energy levels, mental and physical health and helps mitigate the impact of ongoing addictions.

Identify a GP and dentist surgery to register with, and if someone has a current health need and receiving treatment then call both the old and new surgery, and discuss how the transfer of treatment will take place. If feel appropriate then discuss using the Samaritans and give them the phone number.

Emotional support might be planning transport routes to existing friends, family and other support networks, checking the council website for ethnic support and social groups. Discuss what activities the guest likes to do for enjoyment and fun and try to incorporate these into the plan, maybe cooking a favorite comfort dish or rekindling an old hobby like fishing or visiting historic buildings and areas in London.

- If a film fan, then search local cinema location and prices.

Finally it's useful to collate a list of any changes of address, that will need to be informed, eg DVLA, bank etc. The guest could potentially write a generic blanket email template and add to the plan including a list of places and people to send it to.