



Barriers to Accessing Support Services A Good Practice Guide

The following document sets out barriers for service users accessing support services throughout Kirklees and offers some good practice advice and offers solutions.

Barrier	Detail	Good practice solutions
1. Raising the profile of services	Lack of awareness of existing services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service users are more likely to find a service appropriate to their needs, if it is publicised and targeted in the places they are likely to visit. For example, distribution of leaflets and posters in drop in centres, GP surgeries, local community organisations, local religious centres etc. • Providers should consider holding open days, or visit local community groups to raise awareness. • An annual supporting people fair could be arranged to network, promote and celebrate the work done by support providers and stakeholders. • The content and style of the leaflet or poster should be accessible. For example, older people may require large print; people with learning disabilities or poor literacy skills may prefer picture format.
2. Rent arrears or debt	Current or former arrears, re-charges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waiver the exclusion where a support package identifies steps to pay off debt. • Educate or provide pre-tenancy training to service users by explaining the tenancy agreement, housing benefit process and ensuring service users are fully aware of what they need to do if

		they want to give notice on their property or their circumstances change. This should prevent some people abandoning the property or falling into arrears.
3. Cost	Accommodation and or support is too expensive for people on low income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providers could carry out a standard check of service user's circumstances to see if they would qualify for some assistance or fairer charging.
4. Anti-social behaviour	Previous history of anti-social behaviour, violence, intimidation etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove blanket bans and manage through risk assessments and control measures to manage risk. • Support services can be put in place to help people deal with their behaviour, as well as understand the consequences of their actions.
5. Arson	Previous history of fire raising, arson etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove blanket bans and manage through risk assessments and control measures to manage risk. • Support services can be put in place to help people deal with their behaviour, as well as understand the consequences of their actions. • Discuss with insurers conditions of removal of exclusion on a case by case basis.
6. Offending History	<p>Offenders who pose a risk to children (Schedule 1 offenders), offenders or ex-offenders</p> <p>Exclusion policies that specify theft / burglary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove blanket exclusion of offenders or offenders who pose a risk to children (Schedule 1). A multi-agency risk assessment approach should be adopted. • Understand the type of offence committed and the likelihood of re-offending before an exclusion decision is made. • Guidance on offenders who pose a risk to children (Schedule 1 offenders): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Schedule 1 offender is the label given to anyone convicted of an offence against a child listed in schedule 1 of the Children & Young Persons Act 1933. However, it is a term which defines people by their offending history rather than ongoing risk they pose. ➤ Providers should work within the Multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) in

		<p>order to make an informed decision on the suitability of support and accommodation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The conclusion that an individual poses a 'risk to children' should be based on all available information including that provided by relevant agencies, such as assessments of risk made by probation, police, health, whether individually or via the multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA).
7. History of violence towards people and property	Health & safety - risk to others on the scheme / service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove blanket exclusions and assess through risk assessment and risk management plans • Implement pre-support agreement covering boundaries of behaviour, consequences and alternative strategies to violent behaviour. • Alternatives to lone working. E.g. staff double up.
8. Substance misuse	Current / previous drug / alcohol abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full needs assessment process to pick up issues relating to drug and alcohol misuse. If the support provider feels the level of need is too high for their service the client should be referred to an appropriate drug & alcohol service in the area. • Joint working between agencies. • For accommodation extra points should be awarded for service users who are actively engaging with a support service.
9. Mental health	Severe mental health issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full needs assessment process to pick up the level of support required with regards to mental health. If the support provider feels the support needs are too high, the client should be referred to an appropriate service in the area. • Joint working with specialist agencies.
10. Reputation	The reputation of the service user exceeds them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The presenting support needs of the service user should be assessed and not their reputation. • Engaging with support can take many attempts and this should be taken into account.
11. Racial harassment	Previous history of racial harassment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitive lets. • Challenge the behaviour and work with the service user to understand what is acceptable.

12. References	False information, unable to verify information or unable to provide references	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providers and agencies working with vulnerable client groups should aim to develop information sharing protocols in order to gather information on the client to make an informed decision. • The protocol should include the services users consent to share information with specified agencies. • The service user should be given time to provide appropriate information, should have the right of appeal and be informed of what they need to do for the barrier to be lifted.
13. Tenancy Sustainment	Inability to sustain tenancy independently	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This statement should not be used to exclude service users.
14. Tenancy Breach	Breach of tenancy in last 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The exclusion should be based on the type and severity of the breach.
15. Language	Language barriers, E.g. English not 1 st language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretation services such as language line should be used. (www.languageline.co.uk or Tel 0800 169 2879) • For providers working in areas where there are higher levels of minority languages, staff with appropriate language skills could be recruited. Advert could read minority language desirable.
16. Disability	Disability access barriers, E.g. no ramp access, grab rails etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Disability Discrimination Act says Public Bodies (this also includes support providers who contract with the Local Authority) who provide services to the public must make “reasonable adjustments” for disabled people. • “Reasonable adjustments” are:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ making adjustments to the premises such as improving access routes and ensuring that they are free of clutter, or redecorating part of your premises to provide better contrast to someone with a visual impairment. ➢ providing appropriate or additional training for staff who may come into contact with customers with disabilities.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ equipment changes, such as acquiring or using modified equipment, e.g. a telephone with text display for use by a deaf customers. ➤ making service literature and instructions more accessible e.g. providing a Braille version for blind customers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since October 2004 the Act also says providers should make reasonable adjustments to the physical features. • Something which might not be considered a reasonable adjustment now could well be considered reasonable in future. Access should not be considered once and then forgotten. • What is reasonable depends on different situations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Type of services provided ➤ Nature of the service provider and its size and resources ➤ Effect of the disability on the individual disabled person • Some factors when considering what is reasonable are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Whether taking particular steps would be effective in overcoming the difficulty that disabled people face in getting access ➤ The extent to which it is practicable for the service provider to take the steps ➤ Financial and other costs of making the adjustment ➤ The amount of disruption caused by taking the steps ➤ Money already spent on making adjustments ➤ The availability of financial or other assistance • For further information visit www.drc.org.uk • Providers can advertise their accessibility by applying for the Disability Symbol through the Job Centre Disability Services. This needs to be renewed annually and acts as a quality marker in relation to accessibility.
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17. Age	Age restrictions on accommodation for young people and age barriers for disabled people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Options have a small amount of money available for use as bonds or rent payments in advance that could be used as a preventative measure for young people to access private rented accommodation. However this is discretionary and not open to every applicant. Providers should Contact Housing Options Advice & Assessment Managers for further information on Huddersfield 01484 221350 or Dewsbury 01924 324310. • Young people are also at a disadvantage as current Housing Benefit legislation restricts room size and rent to under 25 year olds if living in private rented accommodation. Some support providers have worked with landlords to provide shared accommodation for young people. Providers have continued to monitor rent payments and housing benefit claims to give the landlord some extra re-assurance / incentive. • Providers should look to widen access to older person's accommodation to people with physical & sensory disabilities where appropriate.
18. Restricted access to move on accommodation	Temporary & Hostel placements become silted because move on accommodation is restricted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providers should consider the wider implications of their exclusion policies. By not offering accommodation to people currently in temporary accommodation could have knock on implications for other vulnerable people or rough sleepers. • Housing Options have a small amount of money available for use as bonds or rent payments in advance that could be used as a preventative measure for people to access private rented accommodation. However this is discretionary and not open to every applicant. Providers should Contact Housing Options Advice & Assessment Managers for further information on Huddersfield 01484 221350 or Dewsbury 01924 324310. • Supporting People grant conditions 07/08 is currently being consulted on. Proposals include using SP grant for rent deposits for entry into private rented accommodation. This could alleviate some move on issues in the future.
19. Pets	Pets not allowed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pet restrictions should be looked at on a case by case basis rather than a blanket exclusion. • Consult with other service users or tenants before reaching a decision.

20. Children	Services that do not cater for vulnerable people with children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the support service is not appropriate for children, the service user should be referred onto a more appropriate service in the area.
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It may be appropriate after considering all the facts to exclude a service user from a support service. In all cases the exclusion must be fair, open to scrutiny, the service users must have the right of appeal and told what they need to do in order for the exclusion to be lifted. For further information please contact the Supporting People Team:-

Tel: 01484 221721
 Email: supporting.people@kirklees.gov.uk
 Website: www.kirklees.gov.uk/supportingpeople

Or by post to: Supporting People Team, 4th Floor, Civic Centre 1, Huddersfield, HD1 2NF

