



The Whitechapel Centre

Crisis Private Renting Champions 2015 for Client and Landlord Support

Good practice

The Whitechapel's Bond Schemes support single people who are rough sleeping, homeless or at risk of homelessness to access and sustain appropriate accommodation. Many of those supported through the project will have little experience or a poor record of managing a tenancy. Most will have additional support needs, be this in relation to lack of life skills, substance misuse, mental health issues, physical health problems, offending histories.

We ensure successful tenancy sustainment by supporting the landlord in their management of the tenancy and supporting our client in meeting their accommodation and wider needs.

Support to Landlords

We support landlords with advice on property requirements. This includes providing information about the size, type and location of property in demand from our clients; information about property standards and landlord obligations. Some landlords have consulted us prior to making investment decisions about property improvements or property purchases. We will visit each property prior to making any placement and advise of any improvements required. We provide regular reports to the landlord on property condition and anything that needs attention.

We arrange for Housing Benefit payments to be made direct to the landlord (we have a 100% success rate in achieving this). This provides reassurance to the landlord minimising the risk of non-payment. It also means that the client can focus on the expenditure that is within their control and thus build their capability incrementally.

We support the landlord in communicating the requirements of the Tenancy Agreement and work with our clients to develop and sustain a positive relationship with their landlord.

We provide every landlord with a named worker within Whitechapel to contact to help resolve any issues as they arise, guaranteeing support to the tenant for the first six months of the tenancy.

Through our close contact with the Merseyside local authorities we support and encourage landlords to join the CLASS accreditation scheme. This brings additional benefits to the landlord in terms of reputation, access to services, discounts on HMO registration and landlord licensing. Many landlords return to us for repeat business.



Support to Clients

We adopt a person-centred approach. We engage with the client on their agenda (usually their immediate accommodation needs), show commitment via practical support. We use this as a platform to discuss wider issues and agree an individual support plan with each client tailored to their specific needs.

We help find suitable property, help the client establish what they need and can afford and search for a suitable property.

We support the client to set up home, navigate systems, to apply to Liverpool Citizen's Support scheme, source low-cost furniture etc.

We work with the client to budget, understand what they can afford and make provision for future commitments. We help apply for appropriate benefits and provide access to expert welfare-rights advice where necessary.

We advocate and support the client to challenge where appropriate e.g. where landlords seek to impose repairs call-out charges or unfairly recharge for damage. This not only addresses the immediate problem but builds the tenant's understanding and confidence over their rights.

We support people to address the wider issues for example to engage with treatment agencies (for those with substance misuse issues), access structured activities and learning, liaise with the DWP and seek work.

Case study

We were contacted by a Liverpool landlord who wanted to purchase some new properties to rent to our clients. We advised him of the particular specifications to meet the needs of our clients in the Wirral as it can be challenging to find suitable properties in this area. The landlord did acquire some suitable properties and a client called John moved into one of these properties.

John was suffering with post-traumatic stress and experienced paranoia, depression and was alcohol dependent. His worker wrote to the Council to get his housing benefit paid direct to the landlord to ensure that they will receive the rent.

As well as practical support in setting up in his tenancy the worker provided significant emotional support on their regular visits to his home. John was anxious about going out and so his worker would accompany him out to build up his confidence. John was referred to an alcohol service and managed to attend an alcohol support group despite experiencing paranoia about engaging with other people as his worker re-assured him about his interactions with other people.

He was able to reduce his alcohol use which led to an improvement in his mental health. John had experienced some bad health so his worker encouraged him to live a healthier



lifestyle by regularly attending a local gym so his fitness levels improved. He felt isolated so his worker gave him information about a range of training opportunities which lead to him attending a Peer Mentoring course. He made friends on the course and his confidence further improved.

John has significantly improved the quality of his life and has been successful at managing his bond tenancy leading to the landlord offering him a new 12 month tenancy.

About the champion

The Whitechapel Centre is a leading homeless and housing charity for the Liverpool region. We work with people who are sleeping rough, living in hostels or struggling to manage their accommodation. We are committed to helping people find and maintain a home and learn the life skills essential for independent living.



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