

Housing and Community Support (HACS)

Service Description

A Guide to the Service and How to Access it

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**12th May 2023**

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# Introduction

Welcome to Housing and Community Support (HACS). We are part of Horton Housing. This Guide explains our service, what to expect from us and how you can be involved.

Our service is for people who are aged 18+ and looking for housing-related support. We have some services for women only and men only. Our main bases are in Bradford and Keighley but we operate across the Bradford district.

We provide supported accommodation and support in the community. We will work alongside you to help you achieve your housing, health and wellbeing, and employment goals.

Our accommodation service has 120 self-contained, fully furnished flats, 5 self-contained, fully furnished houses and 6 studios with en suite bathrooms and some shared facilities. If you apply for the service, we can explain more about the accommodation, its location, local facilities, bus routes and so on.

Support in the community is also called ‘floating support’. This means that a member of our team visits you in your own home, or you can choose where we meet.

HACS is short-term and provides accommodation and support for up to 6 month. This may be extended for people who need more time. We can discuss this with the person and the Council that funds our service.

# How does the service work?

The **floating support** service is available Monday to Friday, between 9am and 5pm. There is flexibility to work with you outside of office hours and at weekends.

If you live in our **supported accommodation**, you will receive the same support as our floating support service but will also have access to staff 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Staff access may be on site or by telephone, depending on which property you are living in.

You will always be fully involved in and central to planning your support. You and your worker will work together to find the solutions that you want. You can also include other relevant people or agencies. We call this **‘co-production’.**

The service uses a **‘strengths-based approach’**, working flexibly with each person to find out what they want and how they want to achieve it. This means that we help you to recognise and build on your existing strengths and abilities, and encourage you to find the solutions that will work best for you.

A worker will meet with you to discuss your goals and areas you would like to improve in your life. They will then work alongside you to help you to achieve these goals.

Your worker will arrange contact with you on a regular basis. The frequency and length of these contacts may vary, depending on your situation, goals and preference at the time. You can also choose the type of contact, such as a face-to-face meeting, phone call or video call. Meetings can be at home or another agreed place.

Together, you and your worker will create a Support Plan to record your goals and the steps to make them happen. It will help you work towards achieving them and see the progress that you make. It will also help you to manage any difficulties or safety concerns that you may be experiencing. During your meetings, you may think of some new goals you would like to achieve, or you may change your mind about something. You can update or review your Support Plan at any time.

You can involve other professionals, family members or anyone you wish in your support planning.

We can support you to become ‘tenancy ready’, meaning that you will leave the service with the knowledge and skills to manage your own tenancy independently and successfully.

We liaise with local housing departments, other housing associations and private landlords to help you to move on in a planned way from a temporary home to a more independent, long-term home.

We will explain all this to you, and more, when you access our service.

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# Is there a cost for the service?

There is no charge for floating support services.

In our supported accommodation, we will explain the rent and service charges to you before you move in. We can support you to budget, claim welfare benefits and make payments. There is no charge for the support.

# How can you access the service?

**Who can apply?**

You can apply for our service if you:

* Are aged 18 or over, and living in the Bradford Local Authority area.
* Are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of becoming homeless, and are experiencing multiple challenges such as with mental or physical health, learning difficulties or disabilities, substance use or recovery, experience of the criminal justice system, difficulties with budgeting and money management
* Would like to work alongside us on your housing, health, wellbeing and employment goals, and maintaining or developing independent living

The floating support service can support single people, couples and families.

Our accommodation is available for single people and couples. Some of our accommodation is mixed but some is specifically for men only and women only.

Our team does not provide a service that includes bathing, cleaning, shopping, medicine administration or other tasks generally referred to as personal or health-related care.

Each person is considered on an individual basis and there are no unreasonable exclusions from our services.

**How can you apply?**

If you want to access our service, you need to go through Bradford Council’s Housing Options Service.

* You can contact Housing Options directly yourself; or
* A representative can refer you to Housing Options. For example, this could be a health worker, family member or any other person involved in supporting you.

How to contact Housing Options:

* Call 01274 435999 and say you would like help
* Call into the office at

Housing Options Service

Britannia House

Hall Ings

Bradford

BD1 1HX (use the entrance on the corner of Bridge Street and Broadway)

Or

Keighley Town Hall

Bow Street

Keighley

BD21 3PB

* Send an email to housingoptions@bradford.gov.uk and you will get a response

Housing Options will take brief details to pass them on to us at Horton Housing.

If you are homeless and have nowhere to sleep, outside of office hours please phone 01274 381999.

**What happens next?**

Once we have your contact details, we will ring you to gather some more information.

What will we ask you about?

* Brief details about yourself, to check that you meet the service criteria above
* What you would like help with and what your goals are
* Any risks or safety concerns you are aware of in respect to yourself or others

This information will help to determine the best service to help you.

If you meet the criteria above, we will move to the next stage and arrange to meet with you. This will be when we have a vacancy, so there may be a waiting time.

**Our first meeting**

Our first meeting will be a conversation about what you need.

The meeting can take place in your own home, at our office, in our temporary accommodation or at a mutually agreed venue. We can also have the meeting by phone or video call if that suits you better. If you are in custody, we can attend the prison or meet you via video link.

This is a friendly conversation between you and one of our team (sometimes two).

You are welcome to have a person of your choice with you for support or to help you with the discussion.

The meeting usually takes about an hour, but this is flexible, depending on what you wish to share with us.

If you are applying for a supported accommodation service, you will be able to visit the service, meet our team and have a look around.

You can ask us questions to find out more about the service and support we offer. We will explain everything you need to know about being part of the service.

We will need to ask you some questions and make a few notes.

It is a chance for you to tell us in more detail what your wishes and goals are, and to see if we can help you to achieve them.

It is also an opportunity for you to think about whether you feel the service is suitable for you. The discussions we have together and the notes we make help to start your support-planning journey.

**Outcome of our meeting**

After our discussion together, we will be able to decide whether we think we can help you, and check if you think the service feels right for you.

* For floating support, if we both agree to go ahead, we will confirm this and tell you the name of your support worker. If you accept the service, support will start at that point and the first visit will take place within a week.
* If the supported accommodation service is suitable, we will confirm your support worker’s name and arrange a move-in date with you, and support you with the move.
* Occasionally, an emergency referral will take priority over the waiting list.
* Sometimes, if you are waiting for an accommodation space, we can offer you floating support in the meantime.
* If we feel the service is not suitable to help you with your needs, we will explain the reasons for this. If you agree, we can try to find a suitable alternative service for you and help you to apply for it.

If you are unhappy with a decision we have made, you can appeal against the decision. We have an Appeals Procedure to help you do this. Contact the service, and we will explain what to do and help you with the process.

All personal information received is safely stored, used and accessed in accordance our Data Protection Policy (please ask if you would like a copy).

# What can you choose to have support with?

Once you are in the service, everything we do together will be personalised to you. You tell us what you want to achieve, and we will support you to get there.

It is entirely up to you which aspects of your life you choose to have support with. Here are some examples of things that people often choose to look at with us, to give you an idea, but you are not limited to this:

Managing your:

* Home
* Money
* Safety
* Health and well-being

Accessing:

* A new home
* Welfare benefits
* Healthcare (for example, doctor, dentist, optician)
* Specialist support services
* Equipment, aids and adaptations
* Education, training, employment and volunteering opportunities

Exploring

* Social or community activities
* Religious or cultural customs
* Interests and hobbies
* Positive lifestyle choices

Developing:

* Independence and life skills
* Positive relationships with others
* Confidence, resilience and self-esteem

All choices and decisions about your support and life are yours to make. We will make sure you have access to information and understand the options available. We will listen to your choices and work alongside you so that you can make decisions confidently and get the outcomes you want. If you hear us talk about **empowermen**t, this is what we mean.

# What can you expect from us?

**Your rights**

We are committed to treating you fairly and with dignity throughout your time with us. You have the right to:

* Be treated fairly
* Be free from harassment or discrimination
* Be consulted about the way services are delivered, bring ideas and challenge us
* Complain if you are unhappy about our service

When you apply for or take part in our services, we need to collect and keep personal information about you. This information is kept secure either on our secure computer systems or in locked filing cabinets. You have the right to privacy, and we will explain how we protect, record, store, use and share your personal information, and your right to access or change it. You can find more information about this in the ‘Privacy and Cookie Statement’ on our website.

We will give you a Handbook and Support Agreement. They provide more information about all your rights, and some helpful advice. If you live in a Horton Housing property, we will also give you an occupancy agreement and explain everything in it. People who live in our properties have their own keys and we respect their privacy.

Well-trained, knowledgeable, professional staff will support you. They will provide a personalised service and you will be safe in their care.

You have the right to see any of our policies and procedures. We regularly review them to make sure that our services are safe, work within the law, and are of a high standard.

**Our quality standards**

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|  | We have signed up to the **Together with Tenants Charter**. This means we want to make sure that:* You are safe and listened to
* You can help shape our services if you want to
* The homes we provide are good quality and safe
* When things go wrong, it is easy for you to tell us or make a complaint and we will sort it out quickly

Our commitment applies to everyone we work with, whether they live in our accommodation or are accessing any other Horton service. |

Horton Housing is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion, and providing services that are inclusive and accessible for everyone.

We aim to provide excellent services. To do this, we measure our performance against local and national standards.

Our website has more information about our commitments and standards. You can find it in the ‘About Us’ section.

# How can you contribute?

We want your experience with our service to be positive and successful. This is how you can help with this:

* Meet with your worker as agreed
* Be active in developing your Support Plan
* Identify what you wish to achieve
* Agree the actions or steps that you need to take to achieve your goals
* Work in a positive way towards completing the actions to achieve your goals
* Always communicate honestly about how you feel your support is progressing

Everyone has their own skills and abilities to make progress in achieving their goals. We will work with you in the way that helps you to feel comfortable, to ensure you have the best possible chance of success. We always make the process as friendly and welcoming as possible.

If you live in our supported accommodation, you will have some responsibilities within your occupancy agreement. We will explain these to you when you move in.

We ask you to treat us with the same respect and courtesy that we show towards you.

People accessing and working at our services have the right to feel safe and protected at all times. For this reason we do not tolerate threatening, intimidating, aggressive or violent behaviour.

You can also let us know if you require communication via other accessible formats or languages.

# How will we communicate with you?

We will communicate with you via your preferred method such as telephone call, text message or email. We will also follow up formally in writing.

We can keep other people informed if you ask us to.

If you would like this document in a different language or an accessible format, please contact our Communications Team:

Email: communications@hortonhousing.co.uk

Phone: 01274 370 689

# How to have your say

We want all our services to be good quality. We always welcome your comments, compliments or complaints. So please get in touch if there is something you would like to tell us. Our contact details are on the front page.

Alternatively, our Head Office is:

Horton Housing Association

Chartford House

54 Little Horton Lane

Bradford

BD5 0BS

Phone: 01274 370 689

Email: headoffice@hortonhousing.co.uk

Website: <http://www.hortonhousing.co.uk>

Horton Housing Association is charitable and is registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefits Societies Act 2014, registration number 25057R.