Tenancy Support Case Study Examples

Although we have processes to follow in relation to the support provided to vulnerable tenants; it's not a 'one size fits all' service. Support Officers will constantly change their ways of working to meet the needs of the tenants. It is vital that from referral stage to implementing support, we are provided with as much information as possible to identify tenant vulnerabilities. Information relating such as physical and mental ill health disabilities, cultural and religious views and beliefs, addictions, learning difficulties and communication barriers is important for building a picture of tenant needs.

From this information the Support Officer can start to plan ways and methods to be able to effectively build a professional relationship with the tenant. This is instrumental in them being able to support the tenant to achieve their identified goals in a manner that they are able to manage and understand.

Referrals are triaged by Support Officers on duty and allocated to officers who have capacity to pick up new cases. They are prioritised by level of need relating to the tenancy. Rent arrears and possession proceedings are allocated first to prevent or to try and prevent a tenant from losing their tenancy. Issues of safety / risk to the tenant in relation to their tenancy are also prioritised.

Case 1

A tenant was referred to support as she was having difficulties managing her tenancy due to early onset dementia and having a stroke. We established that the lady was also fearful of males due to a history of abuse when she was a child. Female officer was allocated.

- Appointments are made for early mornings and are kept at the same time and the same day each week. This helps to develop a routine to try and assist the lady with remembering appointments.

- A text message is sent to the lady prior to the appointment as a reminder that she will be having a visit from her allocated support officer.

- Notification has been issued to all CBC departments to advise of no male workers to attend the property unannounced. All appointments to be arranged through the Support Officer or Housing Officer.

- A communication book has been set up where a record of support visits is recorded so that the lady can read back to see what has been done on her behalf during the visits. This is kept in a prominent place where it can be seen and accessed as and when she wants.

- Signs have been placed on cupboards to prompt what is kept in them so that she can find things that she needs.

- All calls to other services i.e. utility companies are always carried out with the phone on speaker so that she can hear what is being discussed. This is then added to the communication book.

- A folder has been provided for all letters/ important documents to be kept safe and for ease of access when anything needs dealing with. This is kept in a cupboard with a sign on advising that it is in there.

- Conversations are concise and to the point so that the key points are relayed and the lady is not overwhelmed with too much information as retention is difficult.

Support is ongoing with this tenant.

Case 2

A tenant with identified learning disability vulnerabilities was referred to support due to having no gas supply at her property due to debt. It was established from the information that the tenant was unable to read or write so was unable to manage her correspondence.

- This tenant was allocated to a Support Officer as a matter of urgency due to having no form of heating or hot water due to the gas being capped. This had been done after a recent gas inspection due to there not being any credit on the gas meter to carry out the safety checks on the boiler system.

- All communication with the tenant is over the phone. No letters or text messages are sent as she is unable to read them.

- Voice mail is left after a call as a back-up reminder that she has something to follow up on. She will listen to it and understand what she needs to do.

- All calls to services are carried out over speaker phone so that she can hear what is being said.

- All letters received are placed in a file to be dealt with during support visits.

- All conversations are relayed in basic language avoiding jargon or terminology she would not understand. After a discussion she is asked to relay back to the support officer what she has understood and what needs to be done.

- Appointments are kept to the same day and time weekly to develop routine.

- The Support Officer has made the tenant aware of the logos of companies on letters to show her where the letter has come from. She then has an understanding that a letter with a 'British Gas' logo relates to her gas and electric so could be important.

- Prompt cards have been given to the tenant showing her how pictures of how to check her gas meter to see what credit she has on there and whether she will need to top it up.

Support is ongoing with this tenant. She now has her gas supply reinstated, so she has hot water and heating.