



Support Provider Handbook



First
Priority
HOUSING ASSOCIATION

www.firstpriorityha.co.uk

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INTRODUCTION

First Priority Housing Association are the landlord of this property and the tenants living here. We provide specialised supported housing to people with learning disabilities and mental ill health across the country.

Every tenant will receive a range of services from FPHA under the terms of their tenancy. We operate an intensive housing management service which cover a range of tasks and activities designed to support our tenants. Each tenant is assigned a dedicated Housing Officer who will regularly visit the tenant as part of this service.

As the Support Provider for our tenants, it is important we work closely together so that the people you support are able to live safely and comfortably in their home.

This handbook provides guidance to you as a Support Provider on how you can best help with this.

This handbook is closely linked to our service level contracts we have in place with all support providers working in our homes and or Care Operator Nominations Agreements.

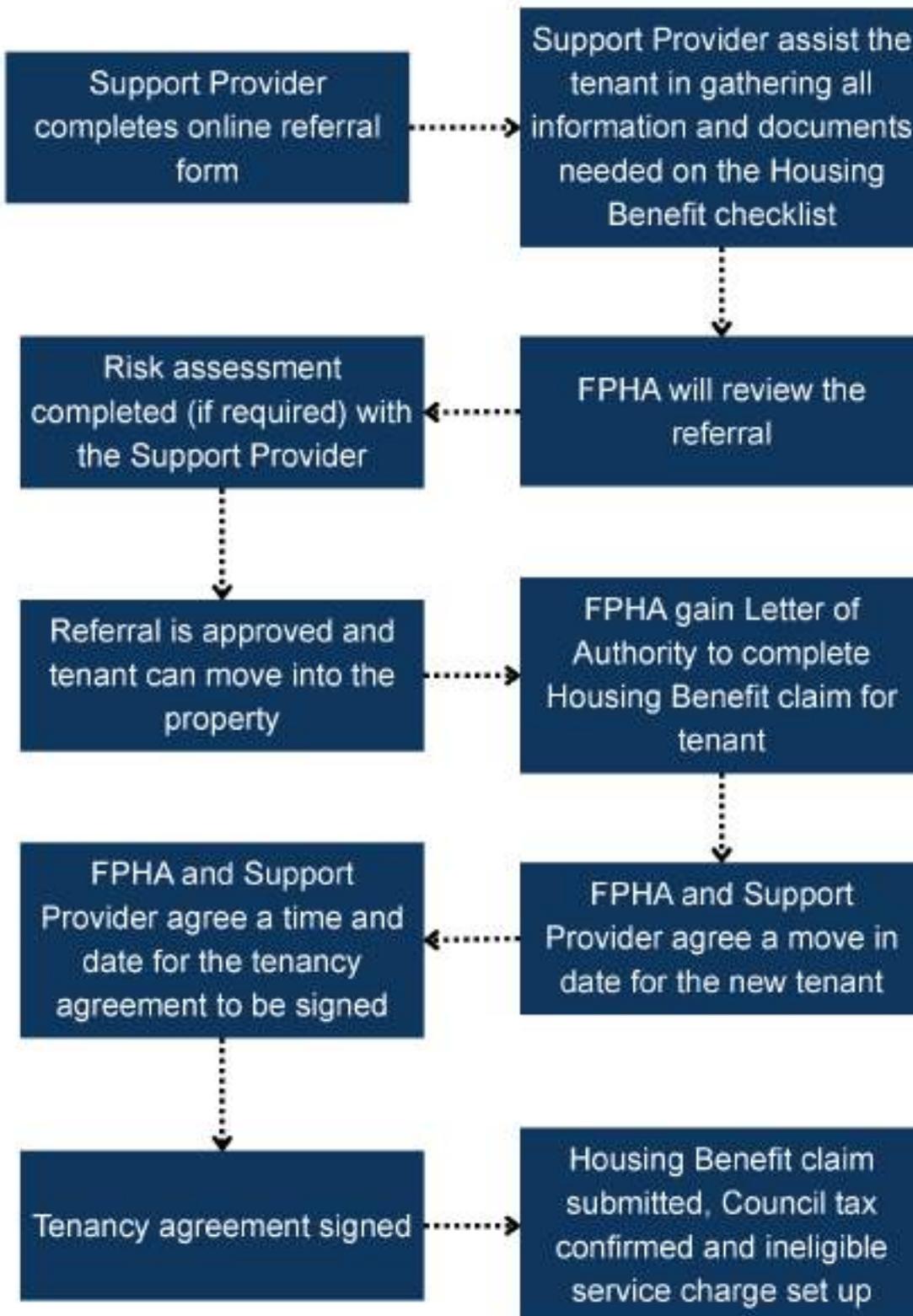
All documents and forms can now be found on our Support Provider hub. Access the hub by scanning the QR code below or visiting www.firstpriorityha.co.uk/hub



**Access our
Support Provider Hub**

NEW TENANTS

The process for bringing new tenants into one of our properties is detailed below:



HOUSING BENEFIT / COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

- Proof of Identity - Birth certificate, passport, medical card, driving license, UK resident permit, ID card (Resident permit), EEC identity card or recent gas or electric bill

- Proof of Address - Recent gas or electric or television license.

- Proof of national insurance number - NI card, payslips or letters from social security or tax office.

- Proof of capital savings or Investments - Bank statements etc. at least the last 3 months.

- Proof of Earnings - Last five payslips for weekly paid, three payslips for fortnightly and two if monthly paid.

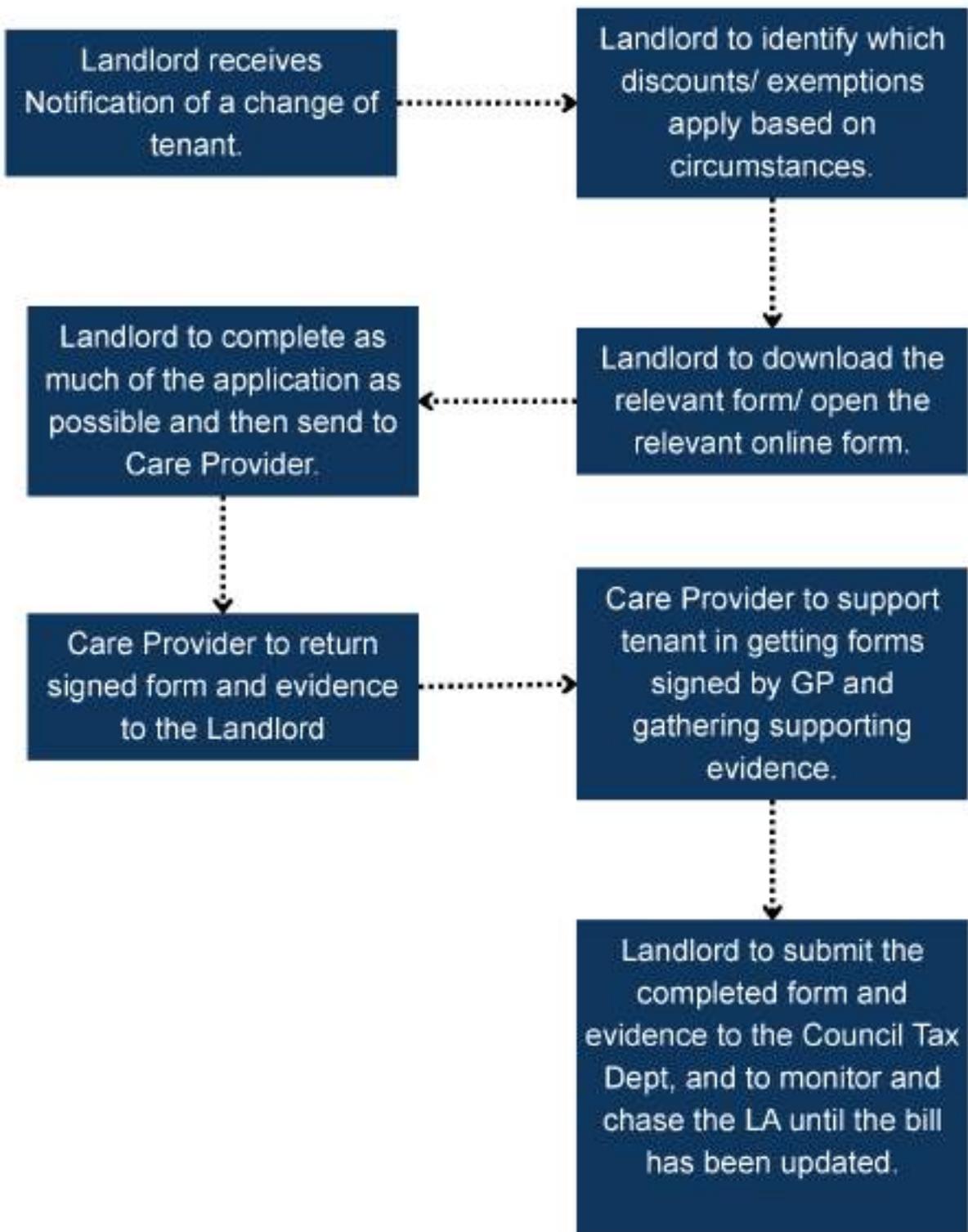
- Proof of Income - Pension slip from former employer or letter from court showing amount of maintenance.

- Proof of benefits, allowances or Pensions - Current award notices or letters from job centre plus, social security office or pension centre confirming amount received (If you don't have proof let us know straight away).

- Proof of private rent/Tenancy - Tenancy agreement from landlord

- Council Tax Submission - Complete the council tax support application. This is an online application via the relevant council's website.

COUNCIL TAX PROCEDURES



TENANCY PROCEDURES AND PROTOCOLS

On the day of sign up the following documents will be left with the tenant (CP/ Financial Appointee)

- Tenancy Agreement (2 copies, 1 retained by tenant, 1 retained by Landlord)
- Compliance Certs (Gas, Elect, EPC)
- Tenant Document Checklist
- Inventory
- Rent & SC Breakdown

The Housing Officer will whilst at the sign up support to make relevant benefit applications for rent, service charge and council tax exemptions, leaving any forms with the tenant and care provider on next steps (for example SMI needs to be signed by GP). Separate process document available to support.

Our Easy Read Tenant Handbook helps tenants to understand their tenancy agreement and what holding a tenancy with FPHA means.

It is important that as a Support Provider, you have access to this and do what you can to help tenants understand their responsibilities. If you have any concerns, you should report these to your Housing Officer.

The Easy Read Tenant Handbook can be found on our Support Provider Hub:



**Access our
Support Provider Hub**

RENT AND SERVICE CHARGES

How will the rent and service charge be paid?

Depending on the tenant's personal circumstances will depend what benefits support they can receive. Tenants will either be eligible for Housing Benefit or Universal Credit, but this will be on case by case basis.

Savings over £16k will typically mean no benefits eligibility, a reduction can be made for savings between £6k and £16k, however there are some exemptions to these rules.

Will the rent and charges be covered by Housing Benefit?

For those tenants who are eligible for housing benefit, any additional costs included within the rent that meet Housing Benefit criteria should be met by Housing Benefit as in most cases, we will have already discussed and agreed with the Local Authority the level of Housing Benefit expected to cover the rent and charges, subject to individual's personal circumstances.

In the unlikely event that the Local Authority refuses to cover the additional charges, in these specific cases the tenant will not be held liable for any shortfall -Please note this does not include shortfalls due to a Housing Benefit overpayment having been made.

It is really important that the tenant (or court appointee on behalf of the tenant) submits a claim for Housing Benefit as soon as their tenancy starts. The tenant's Housing Officer can support with this through gaining a letter of authority from the tenant or their appointee. They will then submit the claim and manage it on the tenant's behalf.

If Housing Benefit is not received due to the tenant or court appointee submitting the form within the first month of the tenancy or failing to provide any information requested by the Local Authority, then the tenant will be liable to pay the full rent and charges as detailed in the tenancy agreement.

Submitting a Housing Benefit claim

It is important that the Support Provider, tenant and appointee gather the required information from the Housing Benefit checklist on page 4. We can then support submitting the claim and managing it on behalf of the tenant. Not having any of this information will delay the payment of the claim, leaving the tenant liable for the rent in the meantime.

Any questions?

Our team are on hand to answer questions you or the tenant may have.

You can contact us through www.firstpriorityha.co.uk/contact

FEEDBACK

How can I provide feedback?

We take all feedback seriously and encourage our tenants, Support Providers and appointees to give feedback at any time.

There are a wide range of ways in which you can all provide feedback:



Easy Read Tenant Satisfaction surveys

Our Housing Officers will offer every tenant the opportunity to take part in our Easy Read Tenant Satisfaction surveys. These cover all our services provided to tenants. They can tell us what they think of our services.

This feedback is reviewed every month, with an annual feedback report produced.



Speak to your Housing Officer or another member of our team

You can speak to your Housing Officer at any time or during one of their property inspections. They will also take feedback in monthly calls with Support Providers. You can also contact our Helpdesk through

www.firstpriorityha.co.uk/contact

MAKING A COMPLAINT

As a registered provider of social housing, we are members of the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. Our [Complaints Policy](#) is reviewed annually and we are compliant with the Complaint Handling Code.

Our Complaints Policy and ways to make a complaint can be found at www.firstpriorityha.co.uk/complaints-feedback



SUPPORT PROVIDER PROCEDURES AND PROTOCOLS



New tenants

All tenants moving into a service are subject to us receiving a referral for the tenant and approving this. This is to ensure the property is suitable for the tenant and any risks associated to them have risk management plans in place.

The referral form can be accessed through the Support Provider Hub (www.firstpriorityha.co.uk/hub)



Reporting repairs

It is important that your staff on site and our tenants report repairs to us as soon as possible.

All issues should be reported to our Helpdesk. Details can be found at www.firstpriorityha.co.uk/contact



Reporting property damage

If the damage is caused by a tenant, you will need to tell us this when reporting the repair. A member of team will then contact you to complete a damage reporting form. If the tenant continues to cause damage to the property, we may need to take enforcement action and issue warning letters. This would also constitute a breach of their tenancy agreement and could result in eviction.



Tenant behaviour issues

In the event that we are experiencing persistent damaging behaviours from a tenant, we would work with you to try and resolve this. This would also likely include appointed Social Workers and Commissioners to convene best interest meetings. This would assess if the accommodation is still suitable for the tenant.



What happens when we report a repair?

Once a repair is reported, it will be completed according to our Repairs and Maintenance Policy. Once you have contacted the Helpdesk to report the repair, they will tell you what category of repair it is and when someone will attend:

Category	Time to respond
Emergency	within 24 hours
Urgent	within 7 days
Routine	within 28 days
Planned	within 90 days

If we are unable to complete a full repair during our first visit, the engineer in attendance will report this. We will then arrange for someone to attend again to complete the repair.

Damp and mould

It is essential if you find any suspected damp or mould in the property, that this is reported immediately to us. You can do this by contacting the Helpdesk like you would do with reporting a repair.

The team will then ask you some questions and we may require photos of the affected areas. An engineer will then attend within the defined timescales. Our Damp and Mould Policy can be found on our [website](#)



SUPPORT PROVIDER PROCEDURES AND PROTOCOLS

Tenants ending their tenancies

Tenants are able to end their tenancies at any time. If a tenant wants to end their tenancy, they need to give relevant notice based on legislation at the time of notifying First Priority. This can be done in writing by post or email. You will also need to inform their Housing Officer.



Informing us of empty rooms

When you are aware that there will be an empty room in an empty room within a property because you will no longer be supporting the tenant for any reason, you must inform us as soon as possible. You must complete the Intention to Vacate form and send it to info@firstpriorityha.co.uk



You can find the form on the **Support Provider Hub**.

Property upkeep

Properties must be kept clean and tidy. Most tenants have support for this included in their support packages. This is an important part of the tenant's tenancy agreement.



Tenants must also ensure that their properties are well ventilated. This will help to avoid damp and mould in the property.



Failure to keep the property clean and tidy could result in the tenant being issued a warning letter.

Decorating properties

We are responsible for decorating the communal areas of the property. If the tenant would like to redecorate their bedroom, they will need to ask for permission from their Housing Officer. We may also ask that this is returned to neutral colours before the tenant leaves the property.



SUPPORT PROVIDER RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE PROPERTY

The following tasks are the responsibility of the Support Provider at their respective properties:

1. Carrying out all inspections that may be required under Health & Safety legislation including without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing the following:

- Portable appliance testing
- Operational emergency lighting (monthly) and fire alarm tests (weekly);
- Flushing of little used hot and cold water outlets in common parts and Units of Accommodation including Void Units;
- Maintaining up to date log books at the Property for emergency lighting tests and fire alarm tests.
- Immediately logging with the helpdesk any fire alarm or emergency lighting tests which identify failures;



2. Carrying out minor tasks to support occupants at the property:

- Stocking and changing light bulbs in the communal areas at the Property and in the Units of Accommodation;
- Cleaning and rubbish removal of the common parts;
- Ensure all external areas such as gardens, pathways, driveways etc. are kept clear of furniture, household items and rubbish;
- Cleaning and rubbish removal when a tenancy comes to an end;
- Gardening;
- Immediately reporting any damage, they become aware of at the property caused by the operator or occupants and assist the housing association to recover costs;
- Ensure all rooms/units are deep cleaned prior to being handed back to the Landlord/Housing Association;
- Ensure all garages and storage areas are only used for storage relating to the property;



GETTING IN TOUCH



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