

Supporting People:

Support to live independently

What is 'Supporting People'?

Supporting People is part of the Adult Social Care department. It pays for housing support services that help you to live independently. The money comes from the government.

We use the money to:

- pay other organisations to give you this support, and
- make sure that the support is as good as possible.

We work with the five local district councils in East Sussex, with health services and the probation service, to manage the programme and decide how best to spend the money.

Most of it is spent on services provided by organisations that have a contract with us. Service providers include borough and district councils, the Adult Social Care department, housing associations, 'not for profit' organisations and the private sector.

What is housing support?

Housing support is help you can get to find, or stay in, your own home. This includes help to:

- manage your money,
- claim benefits,
- develop domestic or social skills, and
- keep you and your home safe.

Housing support does not include services such as personal care, help with eating, washing and dressing, or day care.

If your need is for this kind of personal support, contact Social Care Direct, our customer contact centre. They can arrange for an assessment of your needs. Their contact details are at the end of this information sheet.

Who benefits from Supporting People services?

Around 8,000 people in East Sussex benefit from Supporting People at any one time. We pay for many different support services, including:

- support workers who help you to stay in your own home by helping with things like managing your money or developing domestic skills,
- sheltered housing (a housing scheme with a manager who supports you in your flat or bungalow),
- support in temporary accommodation such as hostels for homeless people,
- supported-living schemes (accommodation, usually for people under 65, where you can get support, such as help to manage your money or develop domestic skills), and
- refuges (safe places to stay) for people escaping from violence in their homes.

If you need help and support to live independently, you could benefit from a Supporting People service.

For example, you could benefit if you:

- are an older person (which usually means over 65),
- have mental-health problems,
- have a learning or physical disability,
- are blind, partially-sighted or hard of hearing,
- are escaping domestic violence,
- are a young parent,
- have drug or alcohol problems,
- have recently come out of prison, or
- are homeless.

How can I get Supporting People services?

If you think you need a Supporting People service, you should talk to your housing officer, social care assessor, nurse or probation officer.

You can also contact us, the Housing Commissioning team. Our contact details are at the end of this information sheet.

Do I have to pay for the service?

If the support service is planned to last for less than two years, it is free. These are services like refuges, or support workers, that help you for a time while you become more independent.

You only have to pay for a Supporting People service if it is planned to last for more than two years. These are services like sheltered housing where you will receive support for as long as you need it.

Although there is a charge for these services, we will pay for the service if you get:

- Housing Benefit,
- Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit),
- Income Support, or
- Jobseeker's Allowance.

If you don't get any of these benefits but you have less than £23,250 in savings, you can ask us for a financial assessment for help towards paying for your support.

We, or the organisation providing the support, can help you to apply for an assessment.

The financial assessment looks at your income and essential expenses to see how much you will have to contribute towards the cost. There is more about this in our separate leaflet 'What do our services cost?'

What if my financial circumstances change while I'm getting a service?

You must tell the Adult Social Care Finance and Business Information team about any changes in your financial circumstances, such as becoming unemployed or getting a job.

How do you check on the quality of the service?

We look at all Supporting People services regularly to check that they are as good as possible. We check things like whether there are enough staff to give you the right support.

We review services at least once before the contract ends. A review is when we look at a service, and the organisation providing it, to make sure it is still meeting people's needs and is value for money.

When we carry out a review, we ask what you and, for example, housing departments, health trusts and charities, have to say about the service.

We also look at important documents (like budgets, policies and procedures) in detail and consider whether:

- the service is what people want,
- the service is the best quality provided at the best price, and
- the organisation that provides it is doing a good job.

Who is responsible for checking and reviewing Supporting People services?

The **Health, Housing, Social Care and Probation Strategic Forum** is made up of senior officers from the five district and borough councils, Adult Social Care, the probation service and health). The forum is responsible for deciding local policy.

East Sussex County Council is responsible for making sure that the policy is properly followed. The council holds the Supporting People budget.

The **Quality Monitoring Team and Housing Commissioning Team** carry out the checking and review processes according to the policy.

Who decides how the Supporting People programme will develop in future?

It is important that services are developed for the people who need them most. We talk to people who use services, to other organisations, and to people who provide the services, to find out what kind of support people need.

We work with health, probation and housing authorities to make sure that Supporting People money is used in the best way possible.

How can I tell you what I think about a Supporting People service?

If you would like to compliment us, or make a comment or complaint, you should first contact the organisation that provides your service. All the organisations must have a written complaints procedure. You can also contact us at the Housing Commissioning team on 01273 482805.

Can I get involved in decisions about Supporting People?

We are interested to hear what you think about Supporting People services. Look out for notices about meetings with us, or just contact us with your comments.

You can get involved by taking part in reviews and filling in any questionnaires we send you. We use the information you give us to make a plan for improving the service.

We also have a Supporting People service user network (SUN). They meet regularly and get involved in projects such as visiting the organisations that provide services, and evaluating contract tenders.

How can I get more information about Supporting People?

You can find out more about Supporting People services in East Sussex from our website; eastsussex.gov.uk/supportingpeople or you can contact us.

If you would like to see all the latest information about Supporting People, you can visit our website at eastsussex.gov.uk/supportingpeople.

You can also contact us at:
Housing Commissioning Team
Adult Social Care Department
East Sussex County Council
County Hall
Lewes
BN7 1SW.
Phone: 01273 482805
E-mail: supportingpeople@eastsussex.gov.uk

Getting more copies of this leaflet

If you would like this information in large print, in Braille, on audio tape, on CD or in another language, please phone Social Care Direct on 0345 60 80 191.

It is also available on our website in mp3 (audio) and PDF formats, which you can download onto your computer.