# Advice for those living with a mental health condition

The Council recognises that people who have been diagnosed with a mental health condition often need specialised help when considering their housing circumstances and options.

Mental health conditions can become disabling if they are long-term and lasts, or is likely to last, 12 months.

If you are living with a mental health condition you might find that this is having an effect on your accommodation or that it makes it more difficult to secure alternative accommodation. There are a range of services to help with your mental health in sustaining accommodation and seeking to access accommodation.

This document is for people who require housing advice. If you are currently living with a mental health condition and need emergency support with your health you should always contact your GP or emergency health services by calling the NHS on 111 or 999 if you require an ambulance.

## Supported Housing

There is supported housing available through different providers in the Chichester area for people who live with a mental health condition. These could be short or long term options depending on your circumstances.

**Southdown Housing** works with Chichester District Council to provide supported housing accessible through the Council’s housing register. There are two schemes:

* The **Independent Living Scheme (ILS)** is for single people with support need aged 25-60.
* **MyPlace** is for people aged 18-25 with support needs.

Both schemes require a local connection to Chichester to be eligible and provide floating support to people offered social housing tenancies through Hyde Housing Association.

Applicants are required to successfully complete pre-tenancy work to prepare them for independent living.

**Littlehampton & Rustington Housing Society** provides low-support to single people through supported housing schemes in Littlehampton and Rustington.

The **Amber Foundation** has supported housing projects for young people with mental health issues or a history of alcohol abuse or drug misuse.

There is a service called **‘FindItOut’** for young people in Chichester, it runs as a drop in centre and can be found at various locations across West Sussex. They have their own access conditions and exist to support young people aged 13-25 with a connection to West Sussex who have multiple support needs. This can include advice and support concerning mental health, homelessness, relationships, employment and financial independence.

## Short Term Housing Options

For most people the private rented sector provides the most accessible and suitable form of accommodation. There are services that can help in seeking this type of accommodation. The type, size and cost of accommodation most suited to you will likely depend on its affordability.

If you are working you will have more options. The Council recognises that there are obstacles which make it harder for people with mental health issues to access and sustain paid employment and those without an earned income might be dependent on benefits.

Single people aged under 35 in receipt of an income based benefit (e.g. ESA or Universal Credit) will likely be restricted to the ‘Shared Accommodation’ rate. Some people may be exempt and more information can be found here:

[england.shelter.org.uk/housing\_advice/housing\_benefit/shared\_accommodation\_rate\_for\_under\_35s](http://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/housing_benefit/shared_accommodation_rate_for_under_35s).

For a discussion about alternative short-term accommodation options in the Chichester area for people with mental health issues please contact the Contact the Council’s Housing Advice Team.

## Long Term Housing Options (the Housing Register)

### Housing Register ‘Homemove’

Chichester District Council operates a Housing Register called ‘Homemove’. You can make an online application to Homemove through the Council’s website at [www.chichester.gov.uk](http://www.chichester.gov.uk). This is the waiting list for Housing Association properties. There is no council housing in Chichester.

Once you have applied Homemove will assess your application and confirm whether you meet the criteria to be accepted. If you are accepted onto the register you will be placed under one of the four bands (A, B, C and D). The band is determined by the details you provide on your application regarding your need to move. Band A represents the highest need to move while Band D, the least priority. You should provide Homemove with as much information regarding your mental health condition as you can. Additional priority can be awarded for health or social welfare issues that are exacerbated by your living conditions. You will be required to demonstrate this.

If you are on the register, you can choose from the range of vacancies and bid if you are interested in being put forward for the property. You will need to log on to the Homemove website to do this with the details that are sent to you. You can bid on a maximum of three properties each fortnight. Bids can be made either through the website, by text message, post, telephone or by visiting the Council’s offices in East Pallant, Chichester.

You may be considered ineligible for the housing register if you have a history of crime, antisocial behaviour or housing related debt.

## What to do if you are homeless?

The Council works closely with mental health services for people who being discharged from hospital. Please see the specialised Hospital Discharge advice document for more information.

The Council also works closely with GP surgeries and the Community Mental Health Team for those being treated for, and supported with, mental health problems in the community.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 has changed how Councils deal with those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. This is to prioritize opportunities to prevent and relieve homelessness at the earliest opportunity.

If you are homeless today or at risk of becoming homeless you should contact the housing advice team. You should make it clear how you feel your mental health issues might exacerbate your current accommodation or your general health if you were to become homeless. You can contact the housing advice team through the housing advice form.

[www.chichester.gov.uk/housingadviceform](http://www.chichester.gov.uk/housingadviceform)

If the Council is unable to prevent or relieve your threat of homelessness immediately a full assessment of your housing need is likely to be carried out. This will be followed by a Personalised Housing Plan which includes steps to be made by yourself and the Council to prevent or relieve your homelessness. Your mental health needs will be specifically considered and assessed in the process. You will be asked to keep the Council regularly informed with your progress. You may also be referred for specialist assistance from our partner services.

If you are homeless the Council will consider whether you are vulnerable as a result of your mental health to determine if there is a duty to provide temporary accommodation. When considering assistance available the Council will look at:

* the length of time you have suffered from your mental health condition
* the severity of your mental health condition and any formal diagnoses
* if you receive any third-party support (e.g. probation service, advocacy, Community Mental Health Team, drug or alcohol rehabilitation)
* evidence provided about your homelessness
* you current medication and any time spent in hospital
* the nature of your discharge and how successful you have been in securing and sustaining accommodation
* Your support networks including professionals, friends and family
* evidence of any vulnerability including your mental health condition, drug and alcohol misuse or time in care, custody or the armed forces
* any other factors that might impact your ability to find accommodation independently

You are also able to self-refer to services to help with common factors affecting those with mental health issues:

* help with managing day-to-day affairs
* isolation
* accessing health services
* advocacy services
* difficulty with managing finances and budgets
* applying for benefits and Personal Independence Payments

## Local Connection (which Council should you contact for help?)

The Council recognises that mental health is often linked to other issues and may not be an isolated vulnerability factor.

Certain services provided by Chichester District Council will require a local connection to the District to access. If you have no local connection to Chichester but do have a connection elsewhere you may find it advantageous to contact that other local authority first to enquire about services available in that area.

Local Connection criteria for homelessness assistance and eligibility for the housing register are different. Applicants seeking homelessness assistance from Chichester District Council may have certain duties referred to another local authority if they have no connection to Chichester. The council believes this can be confusing for customers in finding positive solutions to their housing issues so would urge people to seek advice from the appropriate authority in the first instance (i.e. where they have a local connection). There are exceptions for people who have fled violence or threats or violence.

Mental health services and support is available in all areas of the country.

## Who else can help you?

**Samaritans** – support for anyone who needs help.

Phone: 116 123

Website: [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

**Sussex Mental Healthline** – telephone mental health support for people in Sussex.

Phone: 0300 5000 101 (24 hour, 365 days a year, calls are usually free from a mobile)

Website: [www.sussexpartnership.nhs.uk/sussex-mental-healthline](http://www.sussexpartnership.nhs.uk/sussex-mental-healthline)

**West Sussex County Council** – information for help with mental health.

Website: [www.westsussex.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/keeping-healthy-and-well/mental-health/](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/keeping-healthy-and-well/mental-health/)

**Coastal West Sussex MIND** – An independent local mental health charity working in West Sussex that offers mental health services along with associated training, support and work within the community. Support is available to young people, adults, older adults, carers and families affected by mental health problems.

Phone: 01903 277 000 (Monday –Friday, 9.00am-5.00pm for general enquiries).

Website: [www.coastalwestsussexmind.org/](file:///%5C%5Cnafiler01%5Cdeptshare%5CRoot%5CHousing%20Services%5CHousing%20Advice%20Team%5CLead%20Users%20%28Needs%20updating%29%5C.s179B%20web%20documents%5Cwww.coastalwestsussexmind.org%5C)

Email: info@coastalwestsussexmind.org

**Richmond Fellowship** – provides a range of supported housing and community based services for people with mental health problems across Sussex.

Phone: 01423 480 426.

Website: [www.richmondfellowship.org.uk/sussex/](http://www.richmondfellowship.org.uk/sussex/)

**Southdown Housing** – provides support services including supported accommodation available through Chichester DC’s Housing Advice Team for vulnerable persons in Sussex.

Phone: 01903 867 320

[**Stonepillow**](http://stonepillow.org.uk/projects/local-assistance/)– offers assistance to single homeless people through their day Hub and night Hostel in Chichester & Bognor Regis.

Phone: 01243 698547

Email: localassistance@stonepillow.org.uk

Chichester address: Restore, Unit 3, Terminus Road, Chichester, PO19 8UE
Open: Monday–Friday, 9.00am-4.30pm (5.00pm for telephone enquiries)

**FindItOut** – offers a range of advice and support to individuals aged 13-25, you can drop in to a FindItOut Centre and if you want to talk to someone in confidence you can make an appointment when you are there.

Phone: 07716227928

Email: ChichesterFIOCentre@westsussex.gov.uk

Chichester address: Chichester Library, Tower Street, Chichester, PO19 1QJ
Open: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 1.00pm-5.00pm