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Section 10 —

Living in a shared house

The main points

- ✓ Some Harbour Light homes are shared with other tenants. Some are just for one person.
- ✓ **Your bedroom is your own space.** Other people should not go in without asking you.
- ✓ You share some rooms, like the kitchen or the bathroom. What is shared is different at each home.
- ✓ Your support worker arranges how sharing works at your home. Ask them, and they will explain.
- ✓ If there is a problem with someone you live with, tell your support worker.

Is this section for you?

Some Harbour Light homes are shared homes. This means more than one tenant lives there.

Some Harbour Light homes are for one person on their own.

If you live on your own, you do not need to read this section.

If you share your home with other tenants, this section is for you.

Shared homes can be houses, bungalows or flats. If you live in a shared flat, you share the kitchen and the bathroom with the other tenants in that flat. This section is for you too.

Your support worker can tell you how things work at your home. Your property information sheet, if you have one, also tells you.

Your own bedroom

You have your own bedroom. It is your own space.

Your tenancy gives you the right to your own room. Other tenants should not come into your room without asking you first.

If we need to come into your room, we will arrange a time with you first. The only time we would not is an emergency, such as a fire or a serious water leak. Section 6 explains more about this.

Locks on bedroom doors

Some Harbour Light homes have a lock on each bedroom door. Some homes do not.

Your support worker can tell you what happens at your home.

Where there is no lock, there is a reason for it. Sometimes it is so that staff can reach you quickly if you need help.

If you are worried about your privacy, or about your belongings, please tell us or tell your support worker. We will talk with you about what can be done.

Rooms you share

In a shared home, some rooms are shared with the other tenants. This is usually some of these:

- the kitchen
- the bathroom
- the living room
- the hallway and the stairs
- the garden, if your home has one

Bathrooms are different at each home. In some homes there is one bathroom that everybody shares. In some homes you have your own bathroom next to your bedroom. This is called an en-suite. Some homes have both.

What is shared is different at each home. Your support worker will show you.

How sharing works at your home

Every shared home is different. The people who live there are different, and what each person needs is different.

Your support provider arranges how sharing works at your home. For example:

- when people use the kitchen
- where you keep your food

- how the bathroom is shared

Ask your support worker about the arrangements at your home. They will explain them to you, and they will help you with them.

Some people need help with cooking. Some people do not use the kitchen at all.

That is OK. Your support worker will help you with food and meals in the way that suits you.

Keeping shared rooms clean

Everyone who lives in a shared house helps to keep the shared rooms clean and tidy. This means rooms like the kitchen, the lounge, the bathroom, the hallway and the stairs.

Your support worker will help you with this. They can help everyone in the house agree who does what.

We look after the garden, the paths and the bin area.

The people you live with

Living with other people can be good. It can also be hard sometimes. Both of these are normal.

These things help:

- Knock before you go into someone's room. Wait for them to answer.
- Ask before you use something that belongs to someone else.
- Be quiet late at night and early in the morning, so other people can sleep.
- Clean up after yourself in the kitchen, if you are able to.
- Tell someone if you are finding something difficult.

Your support worker can help you with any of this.

If there is a problem with someone you live with

Sometimes people who live together do not get along. This happens in every kind of home. It does not mean you have done anything wrong.

Tell your support worker first. The house manager from your support provider knows you, and knows the other people who live there. They are usually the best person to help.

They will listen to you. They will talk to the people involved. They will try to find a way to make things better.

If the problem is serious, or if it keeps happening, your support provider will tell Harbour Light. Other people who help you, such as your social worker, may be asked to help as well.

Section 11 explains what happens with serious or repeated problems.

If someone is frightening you, hurting you, or taking your things, that is different and more serious. Please read Section 12. You can tell Harbour Light straight away. **If you are in danger right now, telephone 999.**

Noise

Sound travels in a shared home. What you can hear, other people can often hear too.

Please think about the people you live with, especially late at night and early in the morning.

Some people make noise because of how their disability affects them. We understand this, and we take it into account.

If noise is a problem for you — noise from someone else, or noise you are making — tell your support worker. There may be something that helps.

Visitors

You can have visitors. This is your home.

If you want someone to stay overnight, ask your support provider first. Your tenancy says this must be agreed in advance.

At the moment, your tenancy allows a visitor to stay for one or two nights in a week, when it has been agreed beforehand.

Please ask before the visit, not afterwards. Other people live in your home too, and staff need to know who is in the building.

If you are not sure what applies at your home, ask your support worker. They will explain it to you.

Your belongings

Keep your own things in your own room where you can.

If you keep food in a shared kitchen, your support worker will show you where to put it.

Harbour Light does not insure your belongings. Section 5 explains this.

Bins and recycling

Each home has its own arrangements for bins and recycling. Your support worker can tell you which bins to use and which day they are collected. This is also on your property information sheet, if you have one.

Your support worker will help you.

Please do not leave bin bags in hallways or on the stairs. Section 7 explains why this matters for fire safety.

Telling us about repairs in shared rooms

If something is broken in a shared room, please tell us.

Please do not assume that somebody else has already told us. It is better that we hear about it twice than not at all.

Report it on Fixflo, or ask your support worker to report it. Section 5 explains how.

Safety in a shared home

Fire safety matters a great deal in a shared home, because more people need to get out.

- Keep hallways and stairs clear.
- Keep fire doors closed. Do not prop them open.
- Never keep or charge an e-bike or e-scooter in a hallway or a stairway.

Section 7 explains fire safety in full.

If a shared home is not right for you

If living in a shared home is not working for you, please tell your support worker or tell us.

We cannot always move someone to a different home. But we will listen to you, and we will talk with you, your support worker and your social worker about what might be possible. Section 17 explains more.

Getting help to understand this

If any of this is hard to understand, that is OK. Ask your support worker. You can also ask a relative, a friend or an advocate to help you.

You can ask us for this information on paper, in a bigger size, or in another format. Just ask us or ask your support worker.

For support staff

This box is for support staff, relatives, advocates and social workers.

Practical arrangements are set locally. Arrangements for kitchen use, food storage, bathroom access and similar day-to-day matters at each shared property are for the support provider to set, in line with the needs of the people living there. They will properly differ between mental health and learning disability or autism settings. Please explain the arrangements to each tenant in a way they can understand, and revisit them when the household changes.

Kitchen access varies by individual. Some tenants cannot use a kitchen safely. This is a support plan matter, not a house rule, and should not be presented to a tenant as a restriction imposed by Harbour Light.

Disputes between tenants. The house manager is the first point of contact and is best placed to resolve friction between tenants. Where a matter escalates, becomes persistent, or meets the threshold for anti-social behaviour, complete an incident report and notify Harbour Light so that it is recorded and the appropriate parties — including social workers and community psychiatric nurses where relevant — can be involved. Do not manage a persistent pattern locally without recording it.

Bedroom locks. Whether a bedroom door is fitted with a lock varies between properties. Where a tenant asks for a lock, or raises a concern about privacy or the security of their belongings, refer this to Harbour Light rather than deciding it locally. There are fire safety, risk assessment and Equality Act considerations, and the answer may differ from one tenant to another in the same house.

Overnight visitors. Agreement must be given in advance and should be recorded. When considering a request, take account of the other tenants living at the property and of lone working arrangements. If a request is refused, the reason should be explained to the tenant and recorded.

Communal repairs. Please report defects in shared areas through Fixflo. Do not assume another tenant or another member of staff has already reported it. A duplicate report is not a problem; an unreported hazard is.

More detail

This box is for tenants who want the legal detail, and for support staff, relatives, advocates and social workers. You do not need to read it to understand the section above.

Shared properties. Shared properties include houses, bungalows and flats. Where a tenant occupies a room in a shared flat, the kitchen and bathroom are shared with the other tenants of that flat; some properties also provide en-suite bathrooms alongside a shared bathroom. Where a shared property meets the statutory definition, it is a house in multiple occupation (HMO) and the Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006 apply, including requirements to maintain fire safety measures and to keep escape routes free from obstruction.

Communal cleaning and grounds. Harbour Light looks after gardens, paths and bin areas (SLA Schedule 2(x)). In shared houses, tenants, with the help of their support provider, keep the main shared rooms and circulation areas clean and tidy.

Exclusive occupation of the room. Each tenant holds their own tenancy of their own room, together with shared use of the common parts. Harbour Light's right of entry is governed by the tenancy agreement and requires notice except in an emergency.

Visitors. The tenancy agreement permits a visitor to stay overnight for a limited number of nights per week, subject to prior agreement with the support provider.

Bedroom door locks. Provision varies across the estate. Lockable bedroom doors are generally provided in mental health properties. In learning disability and autism properties, provision is less common, in part because of the risk of a tenant being unable to release a lock, and because staff may need to gain access to provide support. Decisions on locks are made case by case, following an individual risk assessment rather than a blanket rule, taking account of the tenant's privacy and security of belongings alongside the Equality Act 2010 duty to make reasonable adjustments and the fire risk assessment for the property.

Anti-social behaviour. Ordinary friction between people sharing a home is distinct from anti-social behaviour. Section 11 addresses the latter. Conduct expectations in this section are stated in general terms.

Safeguarding. Where the conduct of one tenant towards another meets the safeguarding threshold, it is dealt with under Section 12 and referred to the relevant local authority Safeguarding Adults Team, not through the anti-social behaviour route alone.

Shared utilities and charges. Harbour Light does not set a fixed charge to individual tenants for shared heating, water or electricity, because the amounts cannot be known in advance. Where tenants share utility bills, the support provider usually helps them to divide the cost, often equally between the occupiers. Section 4 explains this.

Fire safety in shared properties. All Harbour Light properties operate simultaneous evacuation. No property operates a stay-put strategy. Section 7 sets out the position in full.