
Floating Support:

FAQ Factsheet for housing officers

What is SHP Floating Support (FS)?

SHP Floating Support is a generic support service, commissioned by Westminster Council, to provide support to residents in Westminster to enable them to live independently, sustain their accommodation and reduce the risk of homelessness. We do this by offering personalised, short-term support. We support adults aged 18 or over with an identified support need, living in Westminster (excluding supported housing, residential and extra care settings) including people, or individual members of a household, living in temporary accommodation provided by Westminster (either inside or outside of the borough).

What type of support does SHP offer?

We offer a range of support to enable residents to manage their tenancy and improve self-sufficiency. Please note: SHP does not provide housing.

Our support includes:

Housing Assistance: help to sustain a tenancy by understanding rights and responsibilities as a tenant, liaison with landlords to ensure repairs are undertaken, support to ensure they know how to bid on properties etc

Financial advice: guidance on budgeting and debt management – linking in with appropriate resources to better manage money.

Daily living skills: Training to enhance daily living skills, such as how to better manage bills, and linking in with community resources regarding this, such as cooking classes.

Social Inclusion: Support to link into community activities to build social connections and reduce isolation.

Health and Wellbeing: support to link into Primary Care resources such as GPs and dentists.

Education and Employment: Support in pursuing education or linking in with employment specialists.

Benefit Support: Assistance to apply for and understand benefits that may be available.

How long does it take for SHP FS to contact the customer after making a referral?

We review our referrals within two working days of receipt and will contact the client within ten working days of being allocated, assuming the referral is accepted.

If the referral is rejected as not eligible we will inform the referral agency within two working days with reasons.

Do SHP FS do visits to the customer?

Yes, the allocated worker will visit the client in their home but support can be offered through a range of methods to best suit the needs of the client.

The frequency of contact will be set at the initial assessment. Please note that we do not conduct daily visits.

How many times will SHP FS try to engage before closing a referral/ case?

We will attempt to engage with the client via a range of methods including calls, texts and cold calls. We will engage with the referrer to let them know of any challenges being faced regarding engagement. There is no specific limit on attempts to engage, however there will be at least three separate attempts made. We will write to all clients who have been referred where a case is due to be closed to inform them of the course of action and how to make contact.

Can a customer self-refer to the service?

Yes, a client can self-refer by either filling in and posting in the referral form or contacting the office. If the client is under the care of a statutory service, we ask that the referral is made by that service. Clients can refer on this email address: westminstersupport@shp.org.uk

If the customer already has support from a mental health service, should I still refer them to SHP FS?

Yes, but please do speak with that service where possible. If you are unable to do so, please notify us so we can check with the statutory service involved to help ensure we are not duplicating support.

If the resident has issues related to substance misuse, should I still refer them to SHP FS?

Yes, if they have additional presenting needs, they can access our support. In the event that the assessment indicates that the client is better served by specialist support we may ask you to refer to Turning Point.

If there are concerns about the customer posing a risk to people, should I still refer them to SHP FS?

Yes, but we would need to be made aware of the risks posed to help us assess whether we are able to manage the level of risk safely and to develop a risk management plan in the event that we do accept the referral.

What support does SHP not offer?

If Unfortunately, we cannot provide any help with personal care or domestic duties (e.g. cooking, cleaning, DIY, gardening, managing medication, shopping etc.) and we can't provide any counselling or befriending.

Can they help with hoarding issues?

Depending on the severity of the issue, we may be able to support however it is case dependent – it may be more appropriate to refer to Safeguarding, Mental Health Teams or specialist services.

Are there age restrictions?

We work with adults over the age of 18 years old.

What area do SHP cover?

We work with individuals who have a tenancy in Westminster or have been placed in temporary accommodation out of borough. We do not work with individuals who are without a tenancy, street homeless or sofa surfing.

Can SHP provide accommodation?

No, SHP do not provide housing.

Will SHP keep other agencies up to date with issues going on for the client?

Yes, we will endeavour to work collaboratively with agencies involved in the client's case which will include relevant updates.

What do SHP expect from external agencies?

We aim to work collaboratively with external agencies and appreciate relevant updates and information being shared. This includes timely responses to emails and enquiries.

How long do you normally offer floating support?

The Floating Support service delivers targeted, time-limited and holistic interventions that successfully help people remain in their own homes. The length of time in the service is dependent on the presenting support need but the upper limit is 12 months.

Do you need consent from the resident before we make a referral?

Ideally consent should have been sourced following discussion with the client however it is not essential for a referral to be made.

If you are making a referral for someone and they have not given consent you are advised to tell them that you will in any event refer them to the service so that SHP can at least make contact and discuss the possible offer. It is also important to make a note of the reasons why a referral is being made in such circumstances eg it is a highly vulnerable client who in your professional opinion needs extra support.

