



## A guide to renting a home for autistic and/or learning disabled people in Greater Manchester



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Thank you to Citizen's Advice and Shelter as most of the information in this leaflet has been taken from www.citizensadvice.org.uk and <u>www.Shelter.org,uk</u>

#### Introduction

This resource has been developed by the Greater Manchester Autism and Learning Disability Housing Implementation group. The group is made up of autistic people and their families and professionals from many different sectors including housing. The purpose of the resource is to support autistic people and people with learning disabilities understand how to rent a property and what their rights are in relation to that as well as where to get help.

Although we have linked autistic and learning disabled people together in this document, it is important to state that the needs of the two groups are often very different and we strongly advise that the support offered is person- centred and that assumptions are not made about needs and adjustments.

There are five documents dealing with different aspects of support on housing for autistic and learning disabled people.

This one is a guide to autistic and learning disabled people who need general housing advice

We also have:

A guide to autistic and learning disabled people facing eviction

A guide to Private Rented Sector Landlords on working with autistic and or learning disabled tenants

A guide to Council/Housing Association Landlords on working with autistic and learning disabled tenants

A guide to Housing Advice organisations on customers with autism or learning disabilities.

All guides can be found on the GMAC website <u>www.autismgm.org.uk</u>

Mari Saeki- On behalf of the GM Autism and LD Housing Implementation group- September 2020

#### Looking for a new home

If you pay money to live in your home this is called rent.

If you pay rent to live in your home you will be the Tenant.

The person you pay this money to is called the Landlord. This is the person or group who own the building

If you are a tenant there are rules that you and your Landlord will have to keep to. When you agree to move into your home you will need to sign a Tenancy agreement that is a list all of these rules.

A person only has a tenancy if they are in self -contained accommodation and not sharing facilities with other people eg a shared house.

Having a tenancy agreement means you live in a property as long as you pay rent and follow the rules.

For general information about housing and types of tenancies, please see the link below.

https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/housing/



There are different places you can rent a home from:

#### A Registered Social Landlord (Council of Housing Associations)

Sometimes known as "Social Landlords", the first step is to register on the housing waiting list with your local council. The council will then decide what priority the application has based on the circumstances of each individual.

For some housing associations, you may have to apply directly and you can find out what housing associations there are in the area you wish to live in by contacting the locality contacts on pages 7-12

https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/wal es/housing/social-housing/applyingfor-social-housing/getting-a-councilhome/

#### A private landlord

This is where a person or more than one person owns your home and you pay rent to them.

You can find out more about how to find and apply for a privately owned home by visiting the Citizens Advice website:

https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/housi ng/renting-privately/privaterenting/finding-a-home-to-rent/

#### Finding your home

#### Social Landlords (Council or housing association)

After you have joined the housing waiting list, you will be informed what banding for priority the council has given you. This can change if your

circumstances changes so you need to keep the housing waiting list form up to date.

Ask your council if you have to bid for homes or if they'll pick one for you.

If they choose one for you, they could offer it by phone. They will usually follow it up with a letter.

Your local council might have an online system where you can look for a home.

If you like a home and it's suitable for you, you can let the council know you're interested by applying for it online - this is called 'bidding'. Your council will tell you how their bidding system works.

The homes will all have a closing date, so make sure you bid before then.

If you've bid for a home, it doesn't mean you'll get it.

Your council will tell you how often you can bid for homes. They might also set a limit on how many homes you can bid for.

Once the bidding period has closed, your council will look at your level of priority and usually how long you've been waiting.

The council will usually offer the home to the person who has the highest level of priority in their scheme.

Some councils offer support for this process called "bidding buddies"

You might be able to refuse a council home if you don't think it's suitable for your needs, but it's important to check - some councils might remove you from their waiting list.

#### **Private Landlords**

The quickest way to find a property is online, on property search websites. You can easily search for the exact area you want and arrange viewings on websites. If it's hard for you to look for a property online you could visit local estate agents. It's also worth asking friends and family and checking local noticeboards and newspapers.

When you're looking for a home don't pay any money without seeing the property first.

Don't rent a property directly from an existing tenant. This is called 'subletting' - the tenant might not have the landlord's permission to rent to you.

If a tenant is just showing you the property on behalf of the landlord they should give you the landlord's details.

Not all landlords and letting agents will let you rent from them if you get Housing Benefit or housing costs payments through Universal Credit.

You only need to tell your landlord or letting agent you get Housing Benefit or Universal Credit if they ask.

You might be able to get a landlord or letting agent to accept you by giving extra references. You could ask more than one of your previous landlords to give you a reference that says your rent was always paid on time.

You could also get a guarantor to help you get accepted. A guarantor is someone who agrees to pay the rent if you don't.

<u>Ask your local council</u> if they have a list of landlords and letting agents who will rent to people who are getting Housing Benefit.

#### Living in your home

If you are already renting or looking to rent a home you might need to make changes to help you live there because you're autistic or learning disabled. You might have a right to make changes because of **The Equality Act 2010.** These changes are called **'reasonable adjustments'**.

It is important that you tell people about your diagnosis as if the housing advice organisations or landlords do not know you have

# this diagnosis, they may not know that they need to make any reasonable adjustments.

Reasonable adjustments can be changes that would:

- Help you be able to look for a home
- Help you to understand how to have and keep a tenancy
- Changes in how your landlord does things
- Changes to your tenancy agreement
- They could also be changes like **equipment** or getting some extra help from someone in your home.

The landlord might have to make adjustments if you being autistic or learning disabled means that it is harder for you to find a property or live in the property compared to someone who is not autistic or leaning disabled.

To find out more about reasonable adjustments visit the Citizens Advice website:

#### https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/housing/discrimination-inhousing/taking-action/asking-for-adjustments-to-help-with-yourdisability/

Tip: Write down what help you think you may need when:

- 1) Looking for a home
- 2) Moving into your home
- 3) Living in your home

You could write these down yourself or get someone you know to help you. This will give you an idea of what reasonable adjustments you may need.

There is a sheet at the end of this document to write your notes on.

#### Example of Reasonable Adjustments you might ask for

Here are a list of examples of reasonable adjustments you could ask for:



- To be able to communicate via the best communication method for you. This may include email, text, phone or face to face, whichever form of communication works best. The autistic or learning disabled person or supporter, may need to explain which form of communication you prefer.
- To make sure that you have understood what is being said/ explained. The staff member needs to check understanding and not make assumptions.
- > To have a named contact or a consistent support.
- To be shown understanding about hypersensitivity to certain things like noise and light which may lead the autistic or learning disabled person to become very stressed or anxious.
- To avoid automated letters and have information communicated in a more person- centred way.
- To consider some kind of mediation if there are issues with neighbours lading to potential conflict
- To have rules about tenancies clearly explained and if necessary have provision of an accessible tenancy agreement.
- To explain the more informal rules about the tenancies such as where bins should be kept, and what constitutes an unacceptable level of noise.
- Allow longer transition periods between properties for autistic and learning disabled people.
- To allow the autistic or learning disabled person to communicate though a support person or family members if needed
- If you feel it would calm you down, to ask about opening a window for fresh air. This is often better than just air conditioning because of the noise.
- Ask if you can bring you own drink when in a meeting as it may also help you to feel less stressed.
- Ask if you can have a longer appointment or two shorter appointments if it would help you process better
- Ask if any of the information is in a visual format including videos

#### Moving home

#### Leaving by choice

If you want to leave your home to move somewhere else you will need to end your tenancy.

If you have a Fixed Term tenancy now, but want to move home click here to find out how to end a tenancy:

https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing\_advice/private\_renting/renewing\_ your\_private\_tenancy

If you have a periodic tenancy and want to move click here to find out more:

https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing\_advice/private\_renting/ending\_a\_ periodic\_tenancy

# Eviction( for more detailed information see the Guide to tenants at risk of eviction)

If you want to stay living in your rented home but your landlord wants you to move out they will ask you to leave either by telling you face to face, over the phone or in writing. If you don't move out they may start a process to **evict** you. This means to apply to court to force you to leave the house or flat you are renting from them.

There are rules about evictions set out in law. You can find out about evictions and your rights by visiting:

#### Shelter UK:

https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing\_advice/eviction

#### **Citizens Advice:**

https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/housing/renting-privately/ending-your-

Charity	Website
Citizens Advice	www.citizensadvice.org.uk/
Housing LIN	www.housinglin.org.uk/
Learning Disability England	www.learningdisabilityengland.org.uk/
MENCAP Learning disability charity	www.mencap.org.uk/
The National Autistic Society	www.autism.org.uk/
Shelter	www.shelter.org.uk/

tenancy/get-help-if-youre-being-evicted-england/

#### Where can I find more information and help?

National information

## General support and advice organisations in Greater Manchester for autistic and learning disabled people

Organisation	Contact
Advocacy together	01706 645 830 / 07867 459 340
Hub- Rochdale	rochdaleadvocacy@together-uk.org
	www.together-uk.org/projects/advocacy-hub- rochdale/
Autizma	07956 002933 / 07950 940030
	info@autizma.co.uk
	www.autizma.co.uk/
Bury People First	0161 705 4342
	www.burypeoplefirst.co.uk/
The Greater	0161 998 4667
Manchester Autism	mari.saeki@nas.org.uk
Consortium	www.autismgm.org.uk/

Manchester People	0161 839 3700
First	mcrpeoplefirst@gmail.com
	www.manpf.org/
People First Tameside	www.peoplefirsttameside.org/
Salfordautism	07713 903224
	support@salfordautism.org.uk
	www.salfordautism.org.uk/
Stepping Stones	07976896351 (Karen)
Across the Spectrum	steppingstones55@yahoo.co.uk
Stockport Speaking	0161 480 8979
Out group	info@stockportadvocacy.co.uk
	www.stockportadvocacy.org.uk/speaking-out-
	group-sog/
Trafford Advocacy	0300 323 096
Hub	admin@advocacyfocus.org.uk
	www.advocacyfocus.org.uk
Wigan and Leigh	01942 728748
People First	info@wlpf.org.uk
	http://wlpf.org.uk/

#### Housing advice services across Greater Manchester

NB Citizens Advice Service, Shelter, Tenants Union, GM Law Centre and MIND offer housing advice in all areas.

Organisation	Contact
Citizens Advice Greater Manchester	www.citizensadvicegm.org Online Chat and also available 7 nights a week from 7pm- 10pm
GM Law Centre	Tel. 0161 769 2244 reception@gmlaw.org.uk
Greater Manchester MIND	www.gmmind.org.uk/about/
Shelter Greater Manchester	www.england.shelter.org.uk/ge t_help/local_services/manches ter/services

	Tel:0161 820 7589
Tenants Union	www.tenantsunion.org.uk/ If you need help with a deposit
	www.billhelp.uk/manchester- rent-deposit-scheme- programmes/
Bury	

Service	Contact
Bury Council	www.bury.gov.uk/index.aspx? articleid=10387
	www.bury.gov.uk/index.aspx? articleid=14177
Bury housing assessment team	www.theburydirectory.co.uk/k b5/bury/directory/service.pag e?id=phRRKbMQKKI
Bury Council - Urgent Housing Advice	0161 253 5537 (9am-5pm Mon-Fri); 0161 253 6606 (out of hours)
Bury Council – Central Access Point (CAP)	CentralAccess@bury.gov.uk Tel. 0161 253 5940

Organisation	Contact
Citizens Advice Bury &	www.cabb.org.uk/
Bolton	0300 300 9071
Bury Law Centre	St John's House, 155-163 The Rock, Bury BL9 0ND 0161 272 0666 info@burylawcentre.co.uk
Bury Red Door	Caritas Centre, St Joseph's Presbytery, Peter St (off Walmersley Road), Bury BL9 6AB
	0161 272 0771 reddoor@caritassalford.org.uk
The Housing Link (young people 16+)	12 Mather Street, Radcliffe M26 4TL
	0161 723 2040 info@thehousinglink.org.uk

Service	Contact
Bolton Council	www.bolton.gov.uk/housing- options-advice
Bolton Housing Advice Services	Tel. 01204 335900 E.housing.options@bolton.gov.uk

## **Other local services**

Organisation	Contact
Bolton at Home	Tel: 01204 328 000, website: www.boltonathome.org.uk/contact- us – webchat facility available.
Citizens Advice Bury & Bolton	www.cabb.org.uk/ 0300 300 9071
Urban Outreach	info@urbanoutreach.co.uk Tel.01204 385848

#### Manchester

Service	Contact
Manchester City Council	www.manchester.gov.uk/info/5 00341/housing_help_and_advi ce
Housing Solutions	Tel. 0161 234 4692 hss@manchester.gov.uk

Organisation	Contact
Barnabus	45 Bloom Street, Manchester M1 3LY
	0161 237 3223
	www.barnabus- manchester.org.uk/im- homeless-and-need-help-1
Booth Centre	For people 18plus
	Pimblett St, Cheetham Hill, Manchester M3 1ET
	0161 835 2499
	www.boothcentre.org.uk/
Centrepoint	Supports homeless 16-25 year olds. Based in city centre and Wythenshawe): www.centrepo int.org.uk/youth- homelessness/get-help-now

	0161 228 7654 or 0808 800 0661; Webchat available.
Cheetham Hill Advice Centre	0161 740 8999 triage@cheethamadvice.org.u k; Text 07823 495307
Citizens Advice Manchester	www.citizensadvicemancheste r.org.uk/ 03444 111 222
	Facebook messenger; Online Chat available. People can self- refer in and they will give you a call back www.citizensadvicemanc hester.org.uk/housing-advice
	They also have free phones in 7 of the libraries which have now reopened (Wythenshawe, Longsight, Newton health, Gorton, Withington, Didsbury and central library.) When the libraries are open, people can go in and call Manchester CAB for free from one of their phones.
Cornerstone Day Centre	104B Denmark Rd, Manchester M15 6JS
	0161 232 8888
	www.cornerstonecds.org.uk/

Lifeshare	First floor, 27 Houldsworth St,
	Manchester M1 1EB
	0161 235 0744
	www.lifeshare.org.uk/
NHS GM mental health	www.gmmh.nhs.uk/housing- advice-service/
Shelter Manchester	www.england.shelter.org.uk/ge t_help/local_services/manches ter 0344 515 1640; Online Chat available www.england.shelter.org.uk/ge t_help/webchat
Reach Out to the Community (South Manchester only)	488 Wilbraham Rd, Chorlton- cum-Hardy, Manchester 0161 862 9415 www.reachouttothecommunity. co.uk/

Service	Contact
Oldham Council	www.oldham.gov.uk/info/200257/homelessness www.oldham.gov.uk/info/100007/housing/1821/ housing_advice_and_support
	www.oldham.gov.uk/info/200904/housing_advic e/2267/housing_options

## **Other local services**

Organisation	Contact
Citizens Advice – Stockport, Oldham, Rochdale, Trafford (CASORT)	www.casort.org/contact 0300 330 9073; Facebook, Twitter, Online Chat
Keyring	Tel. 0161 628 4133; 24-hour helpline Tel. 0333 000 0321
Key To The Door (young people)	www.keytothedoortoysproject.co.uk/ 8 Eldon Precinct, Ashton Road, Oldham, OL8 1JP 0161 633 9242 keytothedoor@btconnect.com

## Rochdale

Service	Contact
Rochdale Borough Housing	0300 303 8548 housing.homelessness@rbh.org.uk www.rbh.org.uk/

Organisation	Contact
Citizens Advice –	www.casort.org/contact
Stockport, Oldham,	0300 330 9073; Facebook, Twitter,
Rochdale, Trafford	Online Chat
(CASORT)	
Gaddum	www.gaddumcentre.co.uk/getting-
	help-rochdale/
Key To The Door	www.keytothedoortoysproject.co.uk/ 8
(young people)	Eldon Precinct, Ashton Road,
	Oldham, OL8 1JP
	0161 633 9242
	keytothedoor@btconnect.com
Rochdale Law Centre	www.rochdalelawcentre.org.uk/housin
	g.html
	15, Drake Street, Rochdale OL16 1RE
	01706 657850;
	admin@rochdalelawcentre.org.uk
	Housing advice tel. 01706 657766
	(limited hours)

Service	Contact
Salford Housing	www.salford.gov.uk/housing/housing-
<b>Options Point</b>	advice-and-support/salford-housing-
(SHOP)	options-point-shop/
	7 Wesley Street, Swinton, M27 6AD
	0161 793 2020; or 0161 794 8888
	(out of hours).

Organisation	Contact
Citizens Advice	www.salfordcab.org.uk/
Salford	0300 330 9074; Email form on website
Salford Loaves &	www.salfordloavesandfishes.org.uk
Fishes	1 Paddington Close, Salford, M6 5PL; Tel. 0161 737 8775; E. info@salfordloavesandfishes.org.uk
Spirit of Salford	www.salford.gov.uk/spiritofsalford; Tel.
	0800 952 1000; Online enquiry form
Manchester City	Windsor Christian Centre, Churchill
Mission (under	Way, Salford M6 5BU
Salford)	0161 736 7959
Mind in Salford	www.mindinsalford.org.uk/coronavirus- update/ 0161 710 1070

Service	Contact
Stockport Homes	www.stockporthomes.org/find- a-home/homeless-advice/
	Cornerstone, 2 Edward
	Street, Stockport SK1 3NQ.
	Online advice or fill in enquiry
	form on website.
	0161 474 3780 or 0161 217
	6016

## **Other local services**

Organisation	Contact
Citizens Advice –	www.casort.org/contact
Stockport, Oldham,	0300 330 9073; Facebook,
Rochdale, Trafford	Twitter, Online Chat
(CASORT)	
The Prevention Alliance	www.stockporttpa.co.uk/
	0161 474 1042
	info@stockporttpa.co.uk
The Wellspring	Harvey Street, Stockport, PO
	BOX 456, SK1 1YD
	0161 477 6344
	info@thewellspring.co.uk Also on Facebook & Twitter.

## Tameside

Service	Contact
Tameside Housing Advice	www.tamesidehousingadvice.org/ 119-125 Old Street, Ashton – under-Lyne OL6 7RL
	0161 331 2700 info@tamesidehousingadvice.org

Organisation	Contact
Citizens Advice	www.tamesidecab.org.uk/
Tameside	0300 330 9076; Textphone: 03444
	111 445
	advice@tamesidecab.org.uk Online
	Chat available
Key To The Door	8 Eldon Precinct, Ashton Road,
(young people)	Oldham, OL8 1JP; Tel. 0161 633
	9242; E.
	keytothedoor@btconnect.com
	www.keytothedoortoysproject.co.uk/

Service	Contact	
Housing Options Service	Waterside House, Sale	
Trafford (HOST), Trafford	Waterside, Sale, M33 7ZF;	
Council	Tel. 0161 912 2230; Tel.	
	0800 218 2000 (out of	
	hours); E.	
	HOST@salixhomes.co.uk	
	www.trafford.gov.uk/residents /housing/housing- advice/Housing-advice	

Organisation	Contact	
Citizens Advice –	www.casort.org/contact	
Stockport, Oldham,	0300 330 9073; Facebook,	
Rochdale, Trafford (CASORT)	Twitter, Online Chat	

Service	Contact			
Housing	www.wigan.gov.uk/Resident/Housing/index.aspx			
Options				
Team,	www.wigan.gov.uk/Resident/Housing/Council-			
Wigan	homes/Find-a-home/What-are-my-housing-			
Council	options/index.aspx			
	www.wigan.gov.uk/Council/Contact-us/Life- Centres/index.aspx 01942 489005			

## **Other local services**

Organisation	Contact	
Citizens Advice Wigan	www.cawb.org.uk/ 0300 3309 077; advice@cawb.org.uk	
The Brick	10 Arcade Street, Wigan, WN1 1LU	
	01942 236953 www.thebrick.org.uk/ enquiries@thebrick.org.uk	

#### Appendix 1



What reasonable adjustments do I need?

#### Notes

	What help do I need	Who can I ask for help with this?
When I am looking for and applying for a home	For example: Help with filling out forms.	
When I move into my home	For example: Help with setting up water, gas and electricity bills.	
When I am living in my home	For example: Help in organising how to pay my bills every month.	