

Accommodation Referral Information: Sophia House

Sophia House has been established through a partnership between the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, the Parish of Our Lady and St Brigid and Father Hudson's Care, the Social Care Agency of the Archdiocese of Birmingham.



Sophia House is a three-bedroom shared living house in Northfield, Birmingham. The leaseholder and day to day contact for the property is Father Hudson's Care (FHC). It is a charitable project and any income from the house/project goes into the running of the house/project.

Eligibility Criteria and referral process

The house offers accommodation to women who are struggling to secure safe and affordable accommodation and are able to commit to a tenancy at housing benefit rate with a small weekly charge towards utilities and services.

The house is open to all women who would benefit from having a tenancy at the house, we especially welcome referrals from migrants and refugees. Full occupancy is based on three women sharing the accommodation.

We currently have a support worker at the house one day per week to manage the house and support the tenants as and when they need this.

Tenancies will be offered either as license agreements or short term assured tenancies for up to a twelve-month period. We do not ask for a deposit, a month's rent in advance or a landlords reference. After this period alternative accommodation will be jointly sourced with the tenants to enable them to make positive housing choices for their long-term future. We will also provide a follow-on landlord reference.



Eligible applicants for a tenancy at Sophia House will be referred by agreed referral partner agencies.

Support measures

- Tenants will receive an induction to Sophia House including their rights and responsibilities.

- Where appropriate tenants will be supported by the Sophia House Support Worker and approved FHC volunteers drawn from the parish of Our Lady and St Brigid's, Northfield and local partnership parishes.
- Tenants will be welcomed into the local community and receive mentoring support in accessing social, education, training and employment opportunities.
- Refugees who have recently had their leave to remain will be supported to secure Universal Credit, bank account etc.
- Tenants will be supported to register for local services such as GP.
- Tenants will receive guidance on managing their finances, paying their rent and financial capability.
- An agreed schedule of one-to-one support meetings throughout the year will be agreed in line with a negotiated progress action plan.



Tenancy applications

- Tenancy applications will be received and reviewed in accordance with the policies of FHC including confidentiality, safeguarding and GDPR data protection regulations.
- Tenancy applications from approved referral partners will be approved or declined by the Sophia House partnership.
- Potential tenants will be invited to an interview and to view the house as part of the assessment process.
- Tenancy applications which have been declined will receive a written explanation of the decision.
- Tenants will be required to sign a copy of the house induction and rules for Sophia House and their tenancy agreement when their application has been approved.

Ending a tenancy

- The tenancy will be held in line with the tenancy agreement document which sets out the rights and responsibilities of both parties.
- If the tenancy agreement /house rules are broken the partnership reserves the right to cancel the client's tenancy
- We request that tenants give one month's notice if they wish to end their tenancy agreement early in line with the tenancy agreement.



Referral Agency Guidelines

Before completing the application form, referral agency to complete criteria guidelines below:

(Tick)

☐	Ensure that the proposed tenant meets the criteria for a Sophia House tenancy
☐	Ensure that referrals are received in a timely manner
☐	Willingness to provide a character reference on request
☐	Willingness to contribute to the internal monitoring and evaluation of Sophia House and any external evaluations