

ASSERTIVE OUTREACH SERVICE

Service Description



DONCASTER HOUSING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE



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DONCASTER HOUSING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The aims of the organisation are to ‘...provide user led supported accommodation services to homeless young people aged between 16 and 25 years, and empowering those young people to fulfill their potential and take their place in society’.

Doncaster Housing for Young People (DHYP) works to empower clients to break the cycle of disadvantage and vulnerability, and to develop a more positive future for themselves and the people around them. The support planning process involves clients at every stage through: assessing their own needs; developing outcome focused aims and goals; devising and working through individual actions plans; reviewing progress and developing life skills and self-confidence along the way.

As an organisation which is designed to focus solely on the needs of young people in Doncaster, DHYP is able to centre attention on clients’ needs in a way that allows time for young people to identify their own priorities and utilise expertise which motivates and supports clients to build self confidence and esteem as they increasingly take responsibility for their own lives.

ASSERTIVE OUTREACH SERVICE

1. Introduction

The Assertive Outreach Service is designed to assist vulnerable young people living within the Doncaster Metropolitan Borough to access and maintain safe, secure and affordable accommodation; while providing support to work towards achieving independent living.

The service will provide information, advice, guidance and support for vulnerable young people living in Doncaster.

The objective is to enable the young person to exit homelessness or vulnerable housing and develop the skills to manage their tenancy and live in the community to the extent that support can, where possible, eventually be withdrawn. Service Users will be able to spend the period of time that funding is available as clients of the service. Funding is currently through The Big Lottery until 31st December 2017.

The service is committed to ensuring that clients have as much respect, dignity, independence, choice and control over their own lives as possible.

It is anticipated that the following outcomes will be achieved:

- Access to safe, affordable accommodation
- Development and maintenance of independent living skills
- Successful management of tenancies
- Development of budgeting skills and management of on-going household expenses, e.g. rents, council tax, fuel bills, food
- Establishment and maintenance of social networks
- Re-engage with learning, training or gain work experience through volunteering
- Successful partnership working with other agencies to end the cycle of homelessness

2. Access, Assessment and Referrals

The Assertive Outreach Team will assess the needs of those nominated to the service to determine their individual strengths and commitment to finding accommodation and independent living as well as their support needs.

Referrals are accepted from single men, women and all household types who are aged between 16-25 years. Referrals can be made in person, by telephoning on 01302 738198 or calling into the office base at Doncaster Foyer, Chequer Road, Doncaster DN1 2AA or by any support agency on the young person's behalf. A referral form will need to be completed by the young person and where applicable the referring agency. The needs assessment process will be carried out by appointment with a member of the project team.

A comprehensive risk assessment will be carried out to determine levels of personal risk-taking by the nominee, any risks to the community and / or staff managing the scheme. Risk strategies will be devised to minimise any issues identified.

Once a referral is received DHYP's Assertive Outreach Team will offer the client a full assessment appointment within 3 working days. Both the client and referring agency will be notified in writing and/or via telephone of the appointment.

The individual referred will be required to be able to work with Assertive Outreach staff and be willing to receive the support service offered.

Following the assessment and subsequent checks and references the Assertive Outreach Team will take the application to the team where a decision will be made whether or not to accept the referral and if immediate support can be offered or if the client will be placed on the waiting list (please refer to DHYP's referral policy and allocation criteria). DHYP aims for this to be within 5 working days and will fully inform the client of any delay in the process.

The Assertive Outreach Team will then write to and/or telephone the nominee and referring agent to inform them of the decision. Each decision will be made on a case-by-case basis.

The Assertive Service can be received by clients living in all types of tenure, including local authority housing; housing association properties; home owners and private rented accommodation. The service can also be received by clients living in vulnerable housing, street homeless and sofa surfing.

DHYP's Assertive Outreach Service is unable to provide specialist counselling and/or personal care services, although we will signpost to services that can offer this support.

3. Profile of Client Group

It is anticipated that the needs of the client group will be complex and require staff intervention as a result of many factors including family breakdown, overcrowding, and history of homelessness or loss of tenancy, antisocial behaviour, financial problems and experiencing harassment and/or abuse. The service is designed to work with young people who are homeless, at risk of losing their home, or are setting up home independently for the first time. These young people will be aged 16-25 years.

Many young people will not have had the opportunity to develop experience in: furnishing their own accommodation; understanding heating and electrical systems; undertaking routine DIY projects; decorating; understanding the rigours and attention needed to maintain regular payment of rent and utilities; maintaining their own health and safety; being responsible for their relationships with their neighbours; using the telephone; managing the benefits system; budgeting on a low income and being responsible for providing themselves with a healthy diet.

The young people entering the service will also often have to cope without supportive family networks, with low levels of self-confidence and low self-esteem, with unresolved emotional issues which can bring about anger management issues and self harming, and potentially with a sense of stigmatisation as a result of not having what may be viewed as a normal childhood.

4. The Support Service

In response to the above, the service will provide a flexible, needs led service, tailored to individual needs with the objective to enable the client to develop the skills to manage their tenancy, and to live confidently in the community.

Individual clients will be guided through a self-assessment process to identify personal strengths and support requirements, as well as an analysis of personal risk taking. From this a personal Support Plan will be agreed in partnership with the Project Worker, the client and any advocate, in which achievable, measurable goals will be identified. The goals will be broken down into smaller stages so that progress can be reviewed and reward given. Support Plan reviews will occur regularly, at least every 3 months, and will include other key support providers, although a review can be initiated at any time by the client involved.

Every client will have an allocated named Assertive Outreach Project Worker responsible for facilitating their support package. Regular meetings will be agreed between the client and their Assertive Outreach Project Worker. These can take place at the client's home, DHYP's office or Hotspot Café facility or any other appropriate location agreed by both parties. For shared accommodation house meetings will also take place between the client, Project Worker and other residents living in the shared accommodation who will also be clients of DHYP's.

Ending support will ideally be planned and agreed by both the client and the Assertive Outreach Project Worker when it is mutually agreed that the client no longer needs support and has developed the skills to live independently. DHYP will complete an exit interview and ensure that clients have up to date contact numbers should they start to run into difficulty that they need support with. At any time should the client request support again a new referral and assessment will be completed. DHYP may end support if it is mutually agreed that it is no longer appropriate for the client to receive the support; following a review of the support plan it is agreed that it is no longer appropriate for the client to receive support; clients repeatedly refuse to accept the support offered by staff; if clients present a serious risk to staff, other clients or workers because of threatening or violent behaviour or harassment and if funding for the service comes to an end and DHYP is unsuccessful in securing further funding.

DHYP works to empower young people to break the cycle of disadvantage and vulnerability, and to develop a more positive future for themselves and the people around them. The support planning process involves the clients at every stage through: assessing their own needs; developing outcome focused aims and goals; devising and working through individual actions plans; reviewing progress and developing life skills and self-confidence along the way.

The limitations of the support service are:

- We cannot offer any care eg if help is needed for bathing, eating etc
- We cannot offer a service if support needs are regarded as high and a referral to other appropriate services would be made
- We cannot support young people outside Doncaster

- We cannot support young people who are already receiving a service from another Supporting People Service unless agreed by all parties and according to the young person's choice

The Support Plan process will describe how the service will:

- Provide a housing support function, including help with neighbour disputes, clarification of tenancy obligation, intervention in incidents of harassment, health and safety issues, arrears prevention;
- Provide help where needed with connection to utilities (gas, electricity, water) including opening accounts and reconnections, furnishing (including claims for grants, loans and charitable grants) and in introduction to the neighbourhood and local facilities where necessary;
- Provide help and advice with housing and related benefits, advice on budgeting and debt management and assistance in maximising income,
- Apply for funding for household items and / or clothing;
- Provide advice on developing skills to obtain work and training opportunities and on organising daytime activities;
- Provide assistance in acquiring daily living skills including cleaning, cooking, shopping and making and keeping appointments;
- Encourage and empower clients to participate fully in community services, to make use of facilities for leisure, and to maximise opportunities for employment and education;
- Encourage contact with family and friends and generally help to establish rewarding social networks and reduce social exclusion;
- Liaise with other agencies, statutory and voluntary, including GPs, hospitals, health professionals, Social Services, YOS and the Probation Service;
- Represent and advocate on behalf of the clients where services are required from agencies within both the statutory and non-statutory sectors;
- Ensure the client's cultural and religious needs are respected, and that assistance is provided if the client is faced with discrimination on the grounds of age, ethnicity, disability, gender or sexual orientation;
- Highlight any risks to the client, the Project Worker or the local neighbourhood and agree risk management strategies, including any specific contacts or responses required in the case of an emergency or crisis;
- Listen to the client's response to the quality of the service provided, and take action to address complaints and sources of dissatisfaction of the client;
- Find a course to study, get involved in volunteering or look for a job;
- Develop skills to get involved in the development and evaluation of services provided by DHYP through the Young Person's Forum

5. Expectations

DHYP's Assertive Outreach Service expects clients to:

- Meet with their Project Worker to agree their support needs
- Identify the goals to be achieved (with the provision of that support)
- Agree a plan based on what the client needs to do to meet those goals
- Agree and attend regular meetings to review and revise support plans
- Treat all the staff at DHYP with courtesy and respect
- Abstain from using/being under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol during appointments as there is the possibility that the contents of the session will be forgotten and will not be productive in working towards the aims of the support plan
- Refrain from showing violent and/or aggressive behaviour during appointments as staff may feel intimidated and have the right to work in a safe environment, therefore may cancel the appointment
- Refrain from any illegal activity during appointments as staff will have to inform the Police in order to follow policy
- Give open and honest feedback about the service so DHYP can ensure it is meeting the needs of the clients.

In return clients can expect DHYP to:

- Treat every individual with courtesy, dignity and respect
- Ensure openness, equality and justice in all activities
- Not discriminate on the grounds of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, beliefs, age or disability
- Listen to and value all opinions
- Encourage and support clients to make informed decisions and choices
- Behave in an appropriate and professional way
- Keep clients informed of and give clients the opportunity to take part in all aspects of DHYP
- Take all complaints seriously
- Work within policies and procedures such as confidentiality, safeguarding and data protection
- Provide support that is tailored to meet individual needs
- Provide staff who are resourced and trained to provide a high quality service
- Consult clients and other agencies about the services that DHYP offers
- Provide clear and accessible information to all sections of the community.

6. Quality Assurance

DHYP has the following external quality standards in place that have been independently assessed and awarded:

- Supporting People accreditation
- ISO 9001: 2008
- CHAS accreditation

DHYP guarantees a high standard of service delivery and this is monitored through:

- Weekly team meetings
- Monthly management review meetings
- Monthly peer audits
- Monthly internal ISO audits
- Regular staff supervision
- Regular and relevant staff training

DHYP also collects annual feedback from stakeholders and partners and quarterly feedback from clients to ensure that everyone involved with DHYP is experiencing and receiving a high standard of service delivery. All feedback is collated and reported to DHYP's Board of Trustees and used to inform future services, business and development plans and policies and procedures.

The clients are at the core of DHYP's services and ethos and as such play an integral part of shaping DHYP's services and future. Clients are involved in shaping the Assertive Outreach Service through:

- Taking part in annual planning days
- Giving feedback through the quarterly questionnaire
- Giving feedback through keywork and review sessions
- Becoming part of DHYP's Young Person's Forum
- Acting as a representative on DHYP's Board of Trustees
- Volunteering at DHYP

6. Service Overview

Provider:	Doncaster Housing for Young People
Service Contact Details:	Doncaster Foyer, Chequer Road, Doncaster, DN1 2AA Tel: 01302 738198 Fax: 01302 321956 Email: admin@dhyp.org.uk Web: www.dhyp.org.uk
Service Hours	Core hours of service provision are between 9am-5pm, Mon-Fri; however we aim to provide flexible support to meet the needs of individual clients.
Staffing:	2 P/T Assertive Outreach Project Workers 1 P/T Deputy Manager 1 F/T Operations Manager
Client Group:	Young people at risk
Service Name:	Assertive Outreach
Description:	Assistance to find set up and maintain accommodation. Benefits advice/information, life skills learning, Housing advice / information, help to access other services.
Service Type:	Outreach
Support Provision:	Outreach support
Ages Supported:	16-25 years
Types of Households Supported:	Single women, Single men, All household types
Client Exclusions:	No specific exclusions, decided on a case-by-case basis
Referral Route:	Self-referral, Doncaster Council, Housing, Health, Citizens Advice Bureau, Probation, Care Trust and other statutory and non-statutory agencies.
Duration of Support:	Not specified – as long as client requires support or as long as DHYP receives funding for the service.
Black & Minority Ethnic Groups Supported:	Yes
Level of Support:	Low-Medium
Capacity:	20 places at any one time
Cost:	Free