



HOUSING SERVICES DEPARTMENT

SUPPORTED HOUSING POLICY

SOURCE DOCUMENTS

Housing Corporation Regulatory Code and Guidance - January 2002
Framework for Performance Assessment for RSLs working with
Managing Agents - July 2004

SEPTEMBER 2004

1. INTRODUCTION AND AIM

Cosmopolitan Housing Association aims, through a programme of continued development and partnership working, to provide a wide range of accommodation to people with special needs. In these circumstances, the Association will assist tenants in supported housing by ensuring appropriate support services are at hand so that they are able to pursue a full, active and rewarding life as part of the surrounding community.

As part of the Government's wider agenda on social inclusion the "Supporting People" programme governs the way in which Cosmopolitan Housing Association manages and develops accommodation and related services. Supporting People has also changed the nature of the relationships Cosmopolitan Housing Association have with the specialist partner agencies with which it works to deliver support and management services. To reflect these changes, this policy takes into account the new regulatory and financial context for RSLs working with managing agents.

Residents in supported housing accommodation schemes are Cosmopolitan Housing Association tenants. To this end we will ensure that they enjoy the same standard and quality of housing applicable to all other association tenants, taking into account their rights for repairs, improvements, transfers and involvement.

2. STATEMENT OF INTENT

Cosmopolitan Housing Association commits to develop supported housing by working in partnership with a variety of specialist statutory and voluntary managing agents. Such relationships will ensure accommodation is both appropriately designed and equipped as well as providing appropriate levels of care and support services.

Supported housing is defined as accommodation which provides care and support over and above that required in general needs accommodation

Cosmopolitan Housing Association expect all bodies with whom it works to subscribe to the principles and objectives laid down under this policy.

3. OBJECTIVE

To provide accommodation and support services for individuals - and their partners or families where necessary - under the following 4 groups of circumstances:

Where difficulty is experienced due to personal circumstances:

- ◆ Offending or risk of offending
- ◆ Physical Disability
- ◆ Learning disabilities
- ◆ Mental Health Problems
- ◆ Drug or Alcohol Related Problems
- ◆ Young/Elderly People at Risk
- ◆ Mothers and Babies
- ◆ People who are HIV, who have AIDS/ARC

Where the available accommodation is unsuitable due to:

- ◆ The threat of violence (e.g. women and children at risk of physical/mental abuse).
- ◆ The inappropriateness of the accommodation (e.g. psychiatric hospitals, prisons, local authority care)
- ◆ The inappropriateness of facilities within the accommodation (e.g. lack of space and equipment for wheelchair users)

Where no accommodation is available:

- ◆ Young Single Homeless.
- ◆ Asylum seekers.
- ◆ Individuals fleeing the threat of violence.

Through floating support services

Where difficulties have arisen with tenants in general housing independently managing their tenancy.

Type of Accommodation

Cosmopolitan Housing Association will aim to develop a wide range of accommodation to meet a wide range of supported housing needs and will ensure:

- ◆ Shared accommodation will not be developed for large numbers of people
- ◆ Where it can be demonstrated larger accommodation would meet need or retain individual circumstances, the provision of such accommodation will be assessed by the Association
- ◆ All such accommodation will guarantee support and companionship through the provision of shared facilities.

Tenure

Residents will be issued with the most appropriate type of agreement, which meets or protects the needs of the particular resident or service.

- ◆ Licences will be used where the level of care, support and services denies the use of a tenancy agreement, e.g. registered care home, or where the need to obtain possession of the premises will involve the issuing of a reasonable period of notice.

In all cases, the occupancy agreement issued will clearly set out the obligations and rights of Cosmopolitan, the managing agent and the resident. A clear grievance and appeals process will be described.

Managing Agent

In order to provide supported housing and supported housing services, Cosmopolitan Housing Association will enter into arrangements with statutory and voluntary organisations, which have the necessary skills and resources to provide appropriate levels of service and support.

These partner agencies will be:

- ◆ Properly constituted
- ◆ Have a viable management structure
- ◆ Have financial stability
- ◆ Be fully accredited (or in the process of becoming so) with the Local Authority as an approved support provider.

4. RISK ASSESSMENT

The Housing Corporation regulatory code expects the operation of a framework that effectively identifies risk. Assessment and management of risk particularly applies where Cosmopolitan Housing Association enters into a contractual arrangement with a management agent or support provider. It is a condition under this policy that all new agents complete and satisfy the requirements of an internal risk assessment. **See Appendix A.**

5. MANAGEMENT CONTRACTS

Central to the working relationship between Cosmopolitan Housing Association and the managing agent is a Housing Management Contract. This document forms a legally binding arrangement between the two parties. Cosmopolitan Housing Association contracts with the agent to carry out designated housing management tasks to define minimum standards. **See Appendix B.** Cosmopolitan Housing Association will pay a fee to the agent for the contracted service.

6. MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS.

Managing agents are also required to complete and return to Cosmopolitan Housing Association:

- ◆ Annual Rent Collection Performance Return/
- ◆ Annual Lettings Performance Return **See Appendix C**
- ◆ Annual Service charge return **See Appendix D**

In addition to the above:

- ◆ Two areas of Housing Management service delivery will be reviewed every three years.
- ◆ Services selected will be identified in conjunction with individual agents.

7. PRINCIPLES FOR NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Cosmopolitan Housing Association will plan schemes and offer services which both support people in becoming valued members of society and which correspond with the Association's special needs strategy and core values.

Cosmopolitan Housing Association will assess the purpose of each scheme carefully and the services required. Factors to be taken into account include:

◆ Community Presence and location

The location of schemes will be in appropriate settings, in ordinary residential neighbourhoods. Wherever possible schemes should be located close to shops, leisure facilities, places of entertainment, workshop, GP's etc.

◆ Re Institutionalisation

Projects will not restrict rights and choices for the sake of administrative convenience. Facilities will offer people the opportunity to enhance their quality of life, by providing a safe, manageable and comfortable environment, with support and stimulation to help people maximise their potential physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual and social capacity.

◆ Personal Choice

Wherever possible people will be able to make choices, have control over their own personal environment; they will have the opportunity to have their own furniture, arrange their room to their particular taste, choose what they eat. For some tenants it will be important to exercise choice about who supports them. Tenants may express a preference for having staff members of their own gender and this should be respected.

◆ Privacy

Tenants have a right to be alone or undisturbed and free from intrusion or public attention in relation to their affairs. Tenants will have the opportunity to have their own room, sharing should only be an option where it is a positive choice on the part of the individual.

People have a right to confidentiality, access to information held on file and to know on what basis any information is held, and on what basis any information may be shared with others.

PRINCIPLES FOR NEW DEVELOPMENTS (CONT'D)

◆ **Self-Determination**

In planning provision for people with special needs, for example people with disabilities, the disabled person has the greatest experience of their own needs and will usually be the best person to give advice about the management of the disability. Whatever the scheme, it is the needs of the users which will determine the type of provision.

◆ **Support According to Need**

The assumption underlying support, will be that people are capable of making choices about their lifestyle, managing finance, smoking, deciding what to do and when to do it rather than vice versa, and until there is clear evidence that the assumption is not valid this principle should be upheld.

Complaints System and Equality of Access

Cosmopolitan expects the following policies and procedures to be in operation at each scheme:

- ◆ Grievance/Complaints Procedure
- ◆ Participation/Involvement Policy
- ◆ Arrears Control Policy
- ◆ Resettlement programme (where appropriate)
- ◆ Health and Safety Policy
- ◆ Resident Support Contract
- ◆ Occupancy Agreement
- ◆ Equality and Diversity Policy

The above list is not exhaustive and a range of responsibilities will be detailed in the Housing Management Contract for each scheme. These will be backed up with approved policy/procedure documentation in each case.

8. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Cosmopolitan Housing Association will at all times work in conjunction with Local Authorities to ensure all planned supported housing provision is both needed and strategically relevant.

Where consultation is deemed necessary, this will be conducted jointly with Cosmopolitan Housing Association, the support provider and where applicable the Local Authority.

9. DEVELOPMENT OF NEW SCHEMES - NEEDS

The development of new schemes is a response to the published 'need' criteria of the local authorities in the Merseyside, Cheshire and Salford areas. Cosmopolitan Housing Association also responds to direct approaches made by agencies to develop. However, in order to attract long term revenue funding, it is essential that such schemes should fit with the locally assessed needs of local authorities in their key role under the Supporting People 'regime'. It is also essential that schemes are consistent with the general criteria and strategic plans laid down by the Housing Corporation.

10. RENTS

Supported Housing schemes delivered via Annual Development Programme capital funding will for the purposes of rent setting, rely on the Housing Corporation Grant Rate Calculator. Cosmopolitan Housing Association has a separate arrangement for the calculation of rents for special needs schemes that are delivered using private finance. Based on a financial feasibility, a net rent is set based on the "break-even" policy for the Association for that particular time. A service charge for the scheme is assessed and an overall rent is then agreed with the care provider.

KEY OBJECTIVES - 2005

- ◆ Adopt use of Housing Management Contracts - **January 2005**
- ◆ Maximise revenue by exploring management costs - **January 2005**
- ◆ As part of Resident involvement review, assess current performance of agents and institute updated performance criteria - **September 2005**
- ◆ Achieve continued growth - **Continued**
- ◆ Establish progressive programme of supported Furnished tenancies - **Six per annum**
- ◆ Ensure through a fixed programme of scheme audits each supported Housing scheme is prepared for the forthcoming supporting people reviews - **September 2005**

9. POLICY REVIEW DOCUMENT

Policy Title	Supported Housing Policy
Date Created	24 September 2004
Review Period	Annual
Previous Review	2003
Review Committee	Board of Management
Version	1
Date last amended	24 September 2004
Authorised by	Board of Management
Date of last review	24 October 2004
Date of next review	October 2005

