

Independent Living Needs and Risk Assessment Policy

Originator:	Policy and Strategy Team
Executive Management Team Approval Date:	August 2023
Review date:	August 2026

1	Introduction
1.1	This Policy sets out One Vision Housing’s (OVH) arrangements for undertaking needs and risk assessments with applicants for the Independent Living Service.
1.2	Each applicant for the Independent Living Service will be assessed against a criteria prior to the service being offered to them to ensure that they have housing related needs.
1.3	The delivery of the service between parties is governed by the Service Contract, which is complementary to the Tenancy Agreement.
1.4	In operating this Policy OVH will comply with the following relevant legislation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Mental Capacity Act 2005 • The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (SVGA) 2006 • The Care Act 2014
1.5	The application of this Policy ensures compliance with the outcomes of the Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that communication with and information for tenants is clear, accessible, relevant, timely and appropriate to the diverse needs of tenants • Treat tenants and prospective tenants with fairness and respect • Understand the diverse needs of tenants, including those arising from protected characteristics, language barriers, and additional support needs • Registered providers shall offer tenancies or terms of occupation which are compatible with the purpose of the accommodation, the needs of individual households, the sustainability of the community, and the efficient use of their housing stock
1.6	Access and Communication
1.6.1	OVH is committed to ensuring that its services are accessible to everyone. OVH will seek alternative methods of access and service delivery where barriers, perceived or real may exist, that may make it difficult for people to work for OVH or use its services.

1.6.2	Working with our customers we have established a Vulnerable Persons and Reasonable Adjustments Policy to ensure we make best use of every customer interaction to meet customers' needs in our service delivery and ensure this information is kept up to date.
1.7	Equality, Diversity and Human Rights
1.7.1	OVH is committed to ensuring that no person or group of persons will be treated less favourably than another person or group of persons and will carry out our duty with positive regard for the following core strands of equality; Age, Disability, Gender, Race, Gender Identity / Gender Expression, Sexual Orientation, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Religion and / or Belief.
1.7.2	OVH also recognise that some people experience disadvantage due to their socio-economic circumstances, employment status, class, appearance, responsibility for dependants, unrelated criminal activities, being HIV positive or with AIDS, or any other matter which causes a person to be treated with injustice.
1.7.3	OVH will endeavour to ensure that all services and actions are delivered within the context of current Human Rights legislation and that its staff and others with whom it works will adhere to the central principles of the Human Rights Act (1998).
1.8	<p>This Policy should be read in conjunction with the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OVH Safeguarding Adults Policy • OVH Safeguarding Children Policy • OVH Maintaining Professional Boundaries Policy • Sovini Staff Handbook • OVH Confidential Reporting Policy • OVH Complaints, Appeals and Feedback Policy • OVH Independent Living Privacy Policy
2	Statement of Intent
2.1	OVH will comply with all relevant legislation, regulation and contractual obligations in all areas of work with regard to the implementation of this Policy.
2.2	OVH will take all reasonable and practical steps to deliver effective needs and risk assessments and will work with other agencies as appropriate to identify, mitigate and manage risk to ensure independence and choice for customers.
2.3	OVH will respond to needs promptly, sensitively, proportionately and consistently in line with the Independent Living service offer.
2.4	OVH will maintain the confidentiality of all information relating to the needs of individuals and other relevant assessments and information, (subject to its Policies, the outcomes of risk assessments and current legislation).
2.5	OVH will respect the rights of individuals to make their own decisions. In all situations there will be an assumption of capacity and individuals will be supported to make choices even where this may seem eccentric or unwise or carry an element of risk - providing people are able to make their own decisions.

2.6	Any concerns over the capacity of adults to make decisions in an informed way will be considered jointly by the Independent Living Manager/ Team Leaders and the relevant professional body will be contacted i.e., General Practitioners (GP) or Adult Social Services if there are concerns over an applicant's / customer's capacity to make informed decisions.
2.7	OVH will provide all Independent Living staff with comprehensive guidance and training on understanding and delivering needs and risk assessments, managing risk and supporting appropriate risk taking.
3	Policy
3.1	All applicants are assessed before an offer of an independent living tenancy is made to ensure the service is appropriate to meet their needs. These assessments will then inform the action plans for customers. Risk assessments accompany the needs assessment to ensure the level of assistance available is sufficient to maintain the customer in independent living accommodation. Risk assessments will not seek to exclude any applicant but look to address the management of any risks posed.
3.2	When a customer feels that the service has met their needs, they may request an assessment to come off service. This assessment will review if their needs have been met and if all identified risks are being managed.
3.3	Customers must give a four week notice prior to coming off the service.
3.4	In the event where customers do not engage with the service, the Independent Living Officer (ILO) will remind customers of the conditions of their Independent Living Agreement and Tenancy Agreement. If the customer continues not to engage, an Independent Living Team Leader will agree further action.
3.5	Where a married couple have a joint tenancy, they should still be assessed as individuals for the purposes of action planning. It may be that one partner features in the other's plan as an informal carer, but each should have the assurance of privacy of any information given in needs assessment discussions.
3.6	Needs and risk assessments will be reviewed as a minimum every six months but will also be triggered by any significant change in circumstances or at a customers' request.
3.7	Assessments will be quality checked by Team Leaders to ensure consistent practice and quality across the service, these quality checks will make suggestions for improvement. All quality checks will be recorded and discussed at Reviews.
3.8	The customer should be directly involved in needs and risk assessments and any consequent risk management plans through one-to-one discussion with the Independent Living Officer. It may also be appropriate to involve other individuals or organisations in identifying and managing risks, for example, relatives or Social Services. This should be with the knowledge and informed consent of the customer. The Independent Living Officer may contribute to the discussion and assessment but must be satisfied that any expressed needs or wishes originate from the customer, with no undue influence from family or friends.
3.9	Where possible, needs and risk assessments and the reviews of the information they contain should include updates and information from agencies and individuals involved in enabling

	<p>the customer to maintain independence. Where the customer has a Care Act Assessment and Care Plan, permission will be sought from the customer to request that information from the statutory body be shared with the Independent Living Officer.</p>
3.10	<p>The dignity of the customer should be always respected and where possible the customer should be offered choice in the way that needs and risks are considered. Where assessments indicate support is outside the ability or responsibility of OVH, customers should be signposted to appropriate services, with Independent Living Officers acting as an advocate as appropriate and this is recorded in the action plan and considered at the review.</p>
3.11	<p>No information gathered about the customer should be shared with anyone else without the prior knowledge and consent of the customer except in cases covered by OVH’s Confidential Reporting Policy, information sharing agreements or protocols with external agencies and the Data Protection Act such as the need to share information to prevent a crime, to prevent risk of harm or actual harm to the individual or others.</p>
3.12	<p>It is important in undertaking needs and risk assessments that staff members are aware of the personal time or resources required to deliver a support service. Unless it is agreed with their line manager staff should not, for example, provide services to customers out of hours or when they are supposed to be on leave. It is important that staff ensure customers are aware that the service is one of befriending and empowerment but is not a personal friendship and cannot be delivered as such.</p>
3.13	<p>Appeals and Complaints</p>
3.13.1	<p>Where OVH refuse to provide an Independent Living service or customers are unhappy with the way they have been treated by OVH, they may seek redress via the OVH Complaints, Appeals and Feedback Policy and procedure.</p>
4	<p>Implementation</p>
4.1	<p>Customers will have a ‘person centred’ housing action plan and safety plan. The action plan will explore all key areas where assistance is needed to maintain independence within the customer's home and in the wider community.</p>
4.2	<p>Any issues arising that include an element of risk should trigger a review of the needs and risk assessment relevant to a particular customer. This should be followed through into the action plan to ensure actions relating to risk management are part of the bigger picture of ensuring a customer can maintain independence. Staff will not be risk averse but will promote appropriate risk taking.</p>
4.3	<p>Copies of the needs and risk assessments are the property of the customer as well as OVH and the customer is entitled to a copy of the documents. Where customers ask not to keep copies of the paperwork, they will be asked to sign a document that confirms this and advised they can have access to the documents at any time. Documents will be stored in secure filing systems and computerised records kept on a password protected system.</p>
5	<p>Performance</p>
5.1	<p>In operating this Policy OVH will record and monitor performance against the following key performance indicators:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target for 100% of action plans to be reviewed every year 	
6	Consultation	
6.1	The Tenant Policy Review Group were consulted in the review of this Policy on XXXX. All OVH staff were consulted in the development of this Policy.	
7	Review	
7.1	The Policy will be reviewed every three years (from the date of EMT approval), with input from the Tenant Policy Review Group. The review process will ensure continuing suitability, and effectiveness of the Policy and may be prompted by the introduction of new legislation / regulation or in the light of findings from ongoing risk assessments of customer's circumstances.	
7.2	Individual customers will be asked for any feedback on the implementation of the Policy and its contents, as will agencies working with customers to deliver support. Independent Living Officers who deliver the service will be asked for their views on the effectiveness of the Policy and its implementation as part of the formal review process.	
8	Equality Impact Assessment	
8.1	Was a full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) required?	Yes
8.2	When was EIA conducted and by who?	An EIA was conducted by the Policy and Strategy Manager and the Independent Living Manager in May 2023
8.3	Results of EIA	There were no key recommendations as result of the EIA as the current systems in place for quality management are thought to be sufficiently robust to mitigate any risks there may be for adverse or differential impact to any group with protected characteristics
9	Scheme of Delegation	
9.1	Responsible committee for approving and monitoring implementation of the policy and any amendments to it	EMT
9.2	Responsible officer for formulating policy and reporting to committee on its effective implementation	Head of Support Services
9.3	Responsible officer for formulating, reviewing and monitoring implementation of procedures	Head of Support Services

Date of revision:	Reason for revision:	Consultation record:	Record of amendments:
22 Dec. 2016	In line with the review schedule	See section 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion that customers may request for an assessment to be removed from service, if they feel their needs have been met • Inclusion of a period of notice when customers request to come off the service • An appeals procedure is also included
4 th February 2020	In line with the review schedule	See section 6	There are no significant changes to this Policy in this review.
1 st August 2023	In line with the review schedule	See section 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy amended to take account of the new review period for a Housing Action Plan • EIA amended to include the new areas of needs on the PTNA and HAP, removing the reference to Every Child Matters domains