

Thurrock Council Supported Housing Accommodation: Commissioning Intentions 2026-28

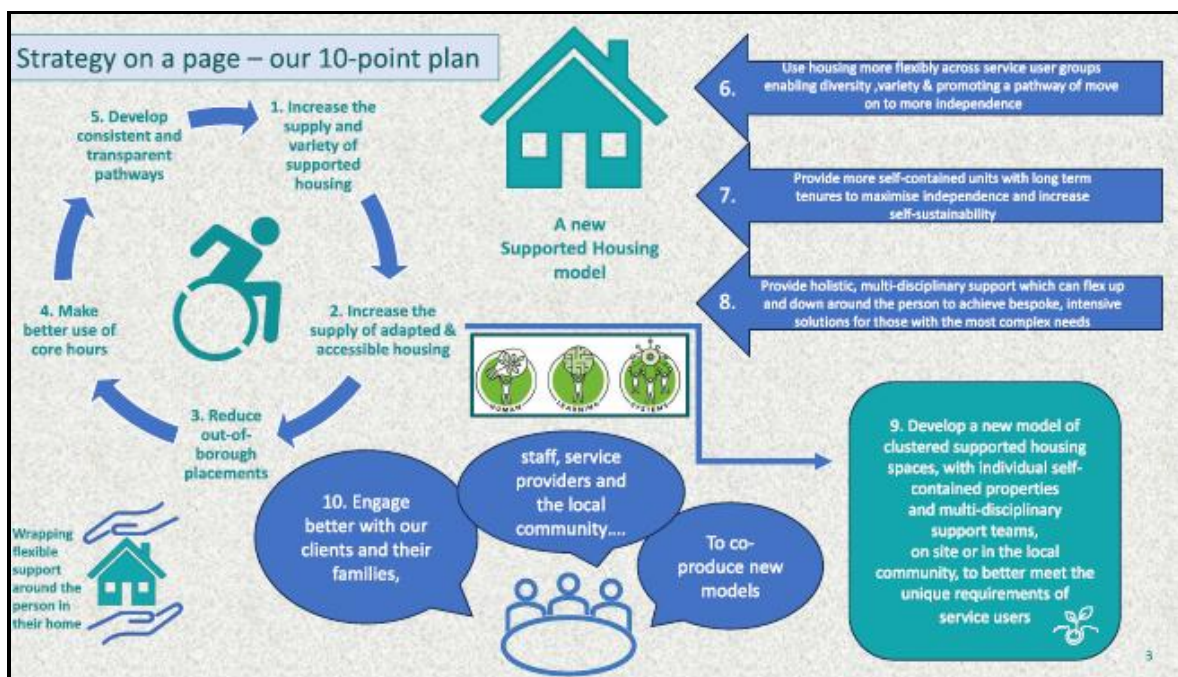


1. Introduction

The ambition of Thurrock Borough Council (TBC) is that all Adult supported housing in the borough provides high standard accommodation and supports residents with gaining independence, meeting their desired outcomes and living meaningful lives.

The quality and type of accommodation available will have an impact on the Adult's wellbeing and what they wish to achieve in life and therefore we need to ensure that accommodation commissioned is of a high standard.

In 2025 we produced a supported housing strategy following a review of supported housing across the borough. The strategy identified 10 key objectives:



The review identified a need for more supported housing in the borough, estimated at 16 extra units each year to accommodate growing need, with a particular emphasis on variety, accessible accommodation, local options and flexible holistic support.

In addition, the Thurrock Autism and Neurodivergence Strategy (currently in development) promotes independence, choice and control over housing to enhance quality of life.

This document sets out the requirements for the standard and quality of supported housing which will be commissioned by TBC. Engagement both internally and externally was undertaken when developing these standards, which will essentially form our terms and conditions when contracting with Providers.

2. Supported Housing

Thurrock Council has used the definition of supported housing as:

“Accommodation provided alongside support, supervision or care to help people live as independently as possible in the community. Individuals using supported housing include people with a learning disability, autistic people, people with mental ill health and elderly people”

Supported housing can be delivered in several forms e.g. in a block of flats, individual houses or a single house with multiple occupiers (House of multiple occupation or HMO). This document identifies the housing as a “Scheme”.

The government has introduced new standards for supported housing under the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 – commonly known as SHROA. The Act has already been passed into law but is due to be implemented in early 2027.

The Act provides National supported Housing Standards which cover four areas:

- Quality of the accommodation
- Quality of the support
- Management, governance and staffing
- Transparency and value for money

Providers will be expected to register under a local licensing scheme which is run by the Council. More details will be provided when the SHROA provisions are implemented.

To enable Providers to understand what Thurrock Council expects in any supported housing they commission, and to ensure we are compliant with SHROA, we have developed our commissioning intentions which are outlined in this document.

- These requirements will apply to both new and existing schemes, with the same standards being applied from 1 April 2027
- Any exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis and are anticipated to be minimal and time limited
- Once commissioned, the scheme is expected to be maintained and meet the standards on an on-going basis – this will be regularly inspected by TBC.

Where the Council needs to use accommodation outside of Thurrock the same standards will be expected and we will work with the local authorities involved to ensure compliance.

3. Separation of landlord and support provider

There are two elements to supported housing:

- The landlord function – provision of the physical accommodation e.g. flat or a room in a shared house

- The support provider function – provision of care and/or support enabling residents to live as independently as possible.

The provision of support may require CQC (Care Quality Commission) registration, but this will not be necessary for all support provided.

Where the care provided meets the CQC threshold¹, registration with CQC will be required. This usually involves the delivery of personal care.

Where CQC registration is not required, the support will still be subject to the Councils regular inspections, including inspections under a SHROA licensing scheme and under PAMMS (Provider Assessment and Market Management Scheme).

The CQC promotes the separation of the landlord and support provider functions. Their guidance can be summarised as follows:

- Keep housing and care contracts separate: Tenancy agreements must be independent of care agreements.
- Ensure genuine tenancy rights: Apply the Real Tenancy Test² to confirm independence and choice.
- Use different organisations where possible: Separate legal entities for housing and care providers.
- Avoid institutional models: Housing and care should not be linked in a way that limits choice.
- Register correctly: If housing and care are inseparable, register with CQC as a care home; otherwise, register for personal care only.
- Commission care independently: Tenants should be able to change care providers without losing their tenancy.
- Document the separation clearly: Maintain written agreements showing distinct housing and care contracts.

Following these practices helps maintain compliance with CQC standards, promotes tenant independence and choice, and ensures legal clarity.

¹ <https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-regulation/providers/registration>

² <https://www.ndti.org.uk/resource/the-real-tenancy-test/>

4. Basics

The following basic requirements are an overview of the minimum standards required by TBC – more detail and specific requirements are provided in section 5.

Property is fit for human habitation Under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, properties must be: ○ Safe and well-maintained ○ Free from hazards that pose health or safety risks ○ Equipped with functioning installations for water, gas, electricity, heating, and sanitation throughout the tenancy	Repairs and maintenance Landlords must: ○ Keep the structure and exterior in good repair ○ Maintain essential services (heating, hot water, sanitation) in good working order ○ Meet all safety requirements ○ Provide a safe and comfortable environment
Support ○ Adequate support must be provided to help residents live as independently as possible ○ Safeguarding measures must be in place to help protect residents from harm ○ Providers must have a clear statement of purpose ○ Providers must have clear and sufficient staffing plans including appropriate training	Accommodation must be ○ Accessible for the residents and appropriately located ○ Assessed for suitability based on residents' health and support needs ○ Of at least the minimum size ○ Managed with safeguarding, risk management, and contingency plans in place
Occupation agreements ○ The appropriate written agreement must be used e.g. tenancy or licence agreement ○ Residents should be enabled to move on to more suitable accommodation if applicable ○ Evictions must be carried out as a last resort, and legally to avoid illegal evictions	Residents' rights ○ The residents' capacity to sign an agreement must be determined before the start date and appropriate measures put in place ○ The resident must have the right to choose both their care provider and accommodation ○ Residents must be listened to, and their best interests must always be paramount

5. Detailed requirements

Below outlines the minimum requirements for all supported housing commissioned through TBC:

5.1 Property requirements

Description	Essential requirements
Flats Flat is described as self-contained accommodation in a block or divided house.	Must have own bedroom, bathroom, kitchen and living area Number of flats at the scheme = no more than 12 in a block Minimum space = 39m² in total The size must meet the individual resident's needs – larger flats may be required for those with more complex needs and accessible bathrooms; wider doorways and wheelchair access may be required for those with a physical disability. The model of fewer flats in a scheme enables greater personalisation and integration with the local community. It also helps to prevent the scheme from standing out in the community with the associated risk of stigmatisation of residents.
Houses of multiple occupation (HMO) or Shared houses Multiple accommodation, sharing facilities such as bathroom, kitchen and living areas Sharing of bedrooms is not usually acceptable unless the service users are living together as a couple	Maximum number of residents living in one shared property = 4 Separate properties must have different addresses, entrances and look like separate properties Minimum bedroom size = 8m² or 12.5m² for a wheelchair user – this is the double bedroom standard as some care may need to be provided within the bedroom which is the person's only personal space This type of accommodation poses the risk of creating an institutionalised setting which does not fit with Thurrock's

	Supported Housing Strategy, since it can deter integration into the community through stigmatisation of residents
Bathrooms in shared houses/HMOs	Preference is for en-suite or own bathrooms, but where bathrooms are shared the minimum requirements apply: 2 residents - 1 bathroom (including toilet) 3 residents – 1 bathroom (including toilet) plus 1 extra separate toilet 4 residents – 2 bathrooms (including toilets) Wheelchair accessible minimum sizes for bathrooms*: • Wet room (shower only) 5.4 m² • Bath only 6 m² • Bath and shower 7 m²
Communal areas in shared houses/HMOs	1–3 tenants – Kitchen/living/dining area: 20 m² Wheelchair accessible: 27 m² 4 tenants - Kitchen/living/dining area: 28 m² Wheelchair accessible: 29 m² The kitchen, living room and dining room in both an open plan arrangement and in separate rooms must be able to accommodate the Adults living there comfortably Where Adults might be preparing meals in the kitchen or developing skills around food preparation the kitchen must be of an appropriate size to enable them to do so. The kitchen must not be so small in size that it becomes limiting when more than 1 person wishes to use it The size of the shared spaces also must consider staff being present or delivering support No staff notices should be present or displayed in the communal areas. The property should look like a domestic dwelling, except for information regarding safeguarding, whistle blowing and health & safety. The size of the shared areas must meet the needs of intended residents

Parking	Availability of parking spaces must ensure that staff cars parked outside the property do not block the drives of other properties or restrict access for other residents or access for emergency vehicles Newbuilds must demonstrate that considerations have been made for sufficient parking spaces and the potential impact on the local area
Garden/ outside areas	Where the property has a garden or outside space it needs to be maintained to a reasonable standard, free of overgrowing weeds or broken garden furniture etc. The garden should be free of loose paving or slippery surfaces. Residents should be encouraged to undertake gardening as a task in their free time if they wish. The garden should be accessible for tenants with mobility needs.
Staff Sleep-in room(s)	A separate room for night sleeping staff should be available where applicable
Utility meters	Gas, electricity and/or any utility meters must not be housed within a room which is to be used as a tenanted bedroom Shared accommodation can have one meter with the utility cost shared amongst the residents as part of their rent Self-contained properties should have their own utility meters
Decorative standard	Walls, ceilings and flooring in good condition (for example no peeling paint, peeling wallpaper, holes, lifting of flooring, trip hazards, no obvious damage) Adequate natural lighting, heating and ventilation. Shared spaces must be free of rubbish and waste. Waste bins to be provided

	The property should be free of heavy wear and tear, staining, mould etc. A hygienic environment with communal areas to be decorated in a neutral style. There should not be any unnecessary signage present.
Meeting the sensory needs of autistic people	Consideration in the design of living environments must be given to the needs of autistic people This may include things such as: - Lighting - Smells/ventilation - Sound proofing - Temperature control The National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi) have developed a report titled '<i>Supporting autistic flourishing at home and beyond: Considering and meeting the sensory needs of autistic people in housing</i>' which offers advice and guidance on designing environments which consider the sensory needs of autistic people. The report also includes a helpful checklist to support improvements to the environment Each autistic individual's sensory needs are different, and this should also be considered when designing environments, with the individual involved in the process as much as possible
Repairs & maintenance	Any repairs and maintenance that are carried out at the property (to the property itself as well as appliances etc) must be: • carried out in a timely way • to a good standard • the organisation carrying out the maintenance or repairs has awareness of the needs of adults with disabilities • considerations must be made for the needs of the adults living at the property to avoid, where possible, causing any distress or major disruptions
Energy efficiency	Domestic private rented properties in England and Wales are subject to the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) where they are let on a relevant tenancy, and are legally required to have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)

	An EPC is generally required where a property is built, sold, or let, and is valid for 10 years. Since 1 April 2020, landlords must not let or continue to let properties with an EPC rating below E unless a valid exemption is registered Landlords are required to carry out all relevant energy efficiency improvements recommended in the EPC report up to a cost cap of £3,500 (including VAT). Where the property cannot be improved to EPC E within this cap, an exemption may be registered Common improvement measures include insulation (loft, wall, or floor), draught proofing, low energy lighting, heating upgrades, double glazing, and renewable technologies such as solar panels More information can be found at: Domestic private rented property: minimum energy efficiency standard - landlord guidance - GOV.UK
Safety / Fire safety	Safety features such as fire alarms and Carbon Monoxide detectors must be used and should be regularly tested and maintained. Doors both external and internal must be fire doors and must be in good working order, able to be closed or locked if needed (no broken locks, handles or warped doors that will not close). No exposed or leaking piping, or exposed, unsafe electrical wiring. Landlords are expected to have available all required safety certificates such as the annual Gas Safety Certificate and 5 Year Fixed Wiring Test Certificate and to comply with the Housing Act 2004 and associated HHSRS guidance. Please refer to the NFCC Specialist Housing guidance for staff and tenant fire evacuation procedures to ensure adherence to best practice. https://nfcc.org.uk/our-services/building-safety/protection-building-safety/specialised-housing/

	If there is any doubt about the safety of the property, please contact Thurrock Council.
Furnishings	In shared accommodation the landlord is responsible for furnishing the communal areas (Table and chairs for dining, sofa(s), window dressings/blinds) living room and kitchen this includes white goods (fridge-freezer, oven, stove, washing machine). White goods must be in good working order and if any break they must be fixed or replaced by the landlord
Office space	Where possible, there should be separate office space on site for staff to use. This needs to be suitable for the number of staff using it and provide a safe, comfortable and functional working environment, including adequate desk space, seating, lighting, ventilation and access to welfare facilities
Digital & technology	There must be the option to install a care line or introduce technology solutions if they would increase the independence of adults or improve their quality of life. Examples of this could be smart plug sockets, Amazon Alexas or Google Echos, a talking microwave or a smart kettle. Communal lounge and bedrooms should have tv aerial points. Suitable phone lines should be available if the tenants wish to have an internet connection installed (the tenant could cover the monthly cost of their internet provision)
Licences	TBC will require evidence that if a property is required to licence under any scheme (e.g. selective licencing, HMO, SHROA) that the property is licenced, and any inspections or Notices received in respect of licenced properties are adhered to.

5.2 Occupation agreements

Tenure type	Licence agreements are usually used for shared properties and provide less secure occupation rights.
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	Tenancy agreements are usually used for self-contained properties such as flats and give greater protection to residents. These are preferred by the Council as they provide greater stability and protection for vulnerable residents. Following the implementation of the Renters Rights Act on 1 May 2026, Assured Shorthold Tenancies (ASTs) can no longer be issued. Instead, Assured Periodic Tenancies (APT) must be used. Any existing AST will automatically become an APT after 1 May 2026. Tenancy agreements must be written and include specific information required by legislation. This may impact move on requirements which are discussed in more detail below.
Evicting a resident	For licence agreements “reasonable notice” is required and this will depend on the circumstances of the individual resident. APTs provide greater protection from eviction for the tenant, meaning a tenant cannot be evicted for no reason – so called “no fault evictions” following the issue of a section 21 notice. For APTs the landlord must prove one of the grounds under section 8 of Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1988. Section 8 grounds can be used for circumstances including: • Severe anti-social behaviour • Rent arrears of at least 3 months (for mandatory grounds or any amount for discretionary grounds) Where residents are in high rent arrears without good cause or are causing anti-social behaviour or breaching their tenancy/licence agreement, and no alternative option can be agreed then the landlord should follow the appropriate legal procedures to evict the resident. Legal advice should be sought.
Moving on	Residents may be ready to move to alternative accommodation because

	– The accommodation is no longer suitable, because the support has ended or funding has been withdrawn – The tenant no longer meets the eligibility criteria for the support provided – The tenant fails to engage with the support provided In such circumstances it is anticipated that a conversation will be held between the provider, resident and adult social care and an agreement made to end the occupation. This should be done in a well-managed and planned manner with alternative accommodation arranged. Any mental capacity issues will need to be addressed to ensure the residents' best interests are protected. However, where no such agreement is reached, then the appropriate legal measures may be used according to the tenure type, to evict the tenant. Where an eviction is needed because the support is no longer required or has ended, new grounds (5E and 5F) have been introduced under the Renters Rights Act. Where a resident refuses to engage in the support, a new ground 18 is applicable, however, the eviction is on discretionary grounds i.e. it is not a mandatory ground. These still require the appropriate notice and court proceedings, so providers need to seek legal advice and ensure they follow the correct procedures. Where the eviction is requested due to support ending it will be important to evidence the support that was provided. For clarification, eviction from a tenancy always requires a court order if the tenant refuses to leave after receiving the correct notice to quit. In all cases it is anticipated that adult social care and the provider will collaborate to support the service user and ensure the best outcomes.
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5.3 Financial requirements

Rent levels	Rent levels should be eligible to be met by local housing allowance benefit with no top ups needed. Rents can only be increased annually, and written notice must be given Council tax in shared property must be in the Landlord's name and part of the core rent
Deposits	Deposits on tenancies will not be accepted since this presents an unnecessary financial burden to residents
Financial stability	If the property owner is not the Landlord, a minimum of 3-years remaining on the lease must be in place. The total rental income from residents should meet the property cost (mortgage or cost of lease) to ensure financial stability

5.4 Support provider

Choice of support provider	It is best practice, and promoted by CQC, to have separate organisations providing the care element and landlord function – see section 2 above. Without this, the independence of the tenancy could be undermined and the accommodation classified as a care home The same provider may be able to supply both but only with clearly separated legal structures for care and the accommodation. This means that the support should not be linked to the tenancy so the resident can choose a different provider if they wish to, enabling greater choice and control.
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5.5 Staffing

Staffing levels	Staffing levels must be appropriate to the level of complexity of the resident's needs.
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	Night staff may be required, and this could be sleeping or waking staff. Appropriate accommodation must be provided
Staff training	Staff must be trained in the following as a minimum: • Data Protection (UK GDPR) • Safeguarding Adults • Mental Capacity Act • Deprivation of Liberty (DOLs) awareness • Equality, Diversity and Inclusion • Health & Safety • Information Governance • Professional Boundaries • Lone Working (if applicable) • Fire Safety • First Aid & Emergency response • Infection Prevention & Control Training must be kept up to date and evidence will be required.

6. Paid Rates

From 1 April 2027, TBC will use a matrix of standardised hourly rates – dependent on the complexity of the service users’ needs and the type of accommodation provided. This will enable providers to make accurate budgeting forecasts.

The hourly rates for each band will be updated on an annual basis and published on the Council’s website. Providers will be notified of any uplifts in advance.

Service users' support needs will be categorised into one of the bands on the matrix. This will be determined at their needs assessment and confirmed or updated at regular reviews by their allocated social care worker in collaboration with providers where applicable

7. Council requirements

We want to encourage providers to supply self-contained and long-term accommodation as much as possible in line with our Supported Housing Strategy. However, we realise that this will not best suit all residents and therefore a variety of tenure and property types will be sought.

We want to ensure suitable supported accommodation is available across the borough – enabling service users to remain in their communities and close to family members and/or friends of their choice.

Some accommodation will be sought outside of the borough for the following reasons:

- on a temporary basis whilst the service user waits for the right type of accommodation inside the borough
- where the service user wishes to live outside the borough e.g. to be close to family
- where the service user needs to move outside the borough e.g. for safety reasons such as fleeing domestic abuse or harassment, to meet bail conditions or for a community treatment order

To achieve a good geographical spread inside the borough the Council may prioritise certain areas for contracts, whilst not offering new contracts within other areas where there is plenty of supply, depending on the current need.

The borough is split into four Primary Care Network (PCN) areas as follows:



Accommodation will be advertised for within these four PCN areas but may also be required from more targeted areas where there is a shortage.

This information will be regularly updated on our website and will enable new and existing providers to understand the need and to plan any new development accordingly.

8. On-boarding process

Any new providers after 1 April 2027 wishing to supply supported accommodation will need to undertake the following on-boarding process. **Please note** – without undertaking this process you will not be eligible to supply the Council with supported housing.

Look at our website to check that the accommodation you are offering meets our current requirements – please note this may change from time to time. Changes can

include accommodation type and geographical area requirements, user group and level of need.
Complete the online application form, providing all the information requested – this can be found on our website. Information required will include location, type & size of property, Client group, Landlord (if separate), Level of experience, CQC registration (if providing regulated care) and details of the responsible person and their background. Failure to provide all requested information will prevent the assessment of your application
A team member will contact you within 10 working days to informally discuss the accommodation you are offering
If you are offering the type of accommodation we need, a series of checks will be carried out – you can find the checklist at Appendix 1 which will enable you to prepare in advance
If you pass these checks, a verification visit will be made to your accommodation to check that it meets all the requirements outlined in section 4 (detailed requirements). At this point the applicable rates will be discussed so that we can both agree which category of accommodation you fall into and the rates to be paid
If you pass the site visit check, your application will be passed to our panel for final approval. The panel will meet monthly
If you are not approved for on boarding this will be discussed with you, including any changes required to enable you to meet the requirements in the future
Once approved the Council will discuss any suitable service users and arrange for them to view the accommodation and meet the provider. It may not be possible to provide a service user immediately and ongoing work cannot be guaranteed
Existing providers on 1 April 2027 will not have to start the on-boarding process but will be expected to line up with the requirements of this document by 1 April 2027 at the latest. This will be verified during the next PAMMS inspection

9. Ongoing monitoring of providers

Regular discussions will be had with providers – particularly around service user’s needs. We wish to foster a good relationship between the service user, provider and ourselves.

Regular visits to review accommodation will be carried out and you may be notified in advance. However, we reserve the right to carry out checks unannounced – particularly where potential safeguarding issues may be involved.

Monitoring tools will be used including PAMMS (Provider Assessment and Market Management Solution). Local authorities use this tool to:

- Monitor performance and compliance
- Assess risk and quality
- Support contract management

This enables action planning if needed and aligns to CQC standards.

The Council wishes to work in close partnership with our providers and will be available to discuss any queries or concerns. You will also be invited to attend our regular Provider Forum where you can learn more and take the opportunity to meet other providers in the borough.

Appendix One – Checklist for new providers

Requirement:	✓
Proof of landlord ownership of the property – this could be a land registry document where the property is owned or a long-term lease agreement	
Evidence of any CQC inspections for the provider including recent ratings	
Outline of core rent to be charged, including a breakdown of the different elements	
Copy of the tenancy or licence agreement to be issued	
Copy of your Statement of Purpose and Service user guide	
Evidence of an initial and ongoing training programme for staff - this must match the level of complexity provided for and must be carried out by suitably qualified and experienced trainers	
Evidence of adequate staffing numbers to meet resident needs Evidence of levels of workforce retention	
Evidence of compliance with SHROA and/or any other appropriate accommodation licence	