

# Great Tenants for families and carers

## KEY POINTS

- Golden Lane Housing (GLH) leases properties in the private sector or social housing tailored to the needs of people with a learning disability.
- Great Tenants helps people rent a home in an area of their choice.
- GLH provides ongoing supported landlord services to tenants.
- Rent is normally paid through Housing Benefit.



Golden Lane Housing

working in partnership with  mencap



# Great Tenants for families and carers

GLH tenant, Gemma lives with her friends. She told us, “Things have changed for all of us and have become more independent.”

## What is a Great Tenants scheme?

GLH understands that people with a learning disability need different things. Rather than trying to fit people into existing houses, we start with the person and find a home tailored to their needs.

Through our Great Tenants scheme, we lease properties in many different ways. This can be from letting agents, developers, support providers to name a few. GLH then becomes the landlord and liaises directly with the tenants.

A great deal of time is spent making sure that the property is suitable for the individual and that they have the correct support to maintain their tenancy. GLH work closely with the person/s, families, social services, support providers and landlords to make sure it is an easy process, from the referral to a person living in their new home. Please be aware that timescales may apply.

GLH will grant a tenancy to the person/s and manage the property to our high standards. Each tenant has a named housing officer and receives our supported landlord services, including a 24-hour helpline.

GLH strive to help people find a home of their choice and where we are unable to help we will offer alternative advice.



## Get in touch

For more information and to discuss any associated costs:

**call 0300 003 7007**  
or email [enquiries@glh.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@glh.org.uk)

# How does it work?

## STEP 1 – Needs assessment

A needs assessment is carried out by the social services department which determines personal support requirements, for example how many hours a week a person requires for their needs.

It is vital that the local authority or health service makes reference to housing requirements during any needs assessment, including current circumstances and future plans and needs.

The personal support package needs to be in place by the time GLH finds a property for a person. The support can be provided either by social services, a care provider or through a person's own arrangements, such as an individual budget.

## STEP 2 – Housing waiting list

A person needs to put their name down on the local housing waiting list, their social worker or a person who supports them can help them to do this.

While GLH recognises that often a social housing waiting list may not be likely to result in housing, registering is an important step, so that councils understand the full extent of needs in their area. This can also help with any future discussions if there are differences between Housing Benefit rates and actual housing costs.

## STEP 3 – Housing needs assessment

If it is agreed that GLH are able to provide housing an Application for housing and Housing requirements form will need to be completed before the property search begins.

GLH will carry out an assessment of the market and likely rent based on a person's needs, housing requirements, finance and benefit entitlements. We would advise of any development fees that may be incurred and are not included in the rent.

### Rent

The majority of GLH tenants pay for their rent through Housing Benefit. We work closely with local Housing Benefit departments to agree rents that are reasonable and paid outside of the normal rules. This provides more financial stability and certainty that rent will be paid in full for our tenants.

If you have a disability you may be entitled to higher levels of Housing Benefit – for example, if you need an additional room for sleep

over support. This is a complex area but our expertise and relationship with local authorities is invaluable in making sure people understand and receive what they are entitled to and get the right housing.

If a person isn't eligible for Housing Benefit or their rent is higher than the amount they can claim, we will support them to look at ways to pay for this through other income - such as, using their wages, savings or benefits.

“ We’re having a great time. We really like this house, we have fun and get on great with the staff. ”  
Thomas, Sebastian and Archie,  
GLH tenants

#### STEP 4 – Finding a property

We will look to identify a suitable property based on a person’s housing needs in the private rented sector or social housing.

People may need a specially adapted home, while this can be possible, often property owners may not be willing to allow major adaptation works to be done to their properties.

#### STEP 5 – Leasing a property

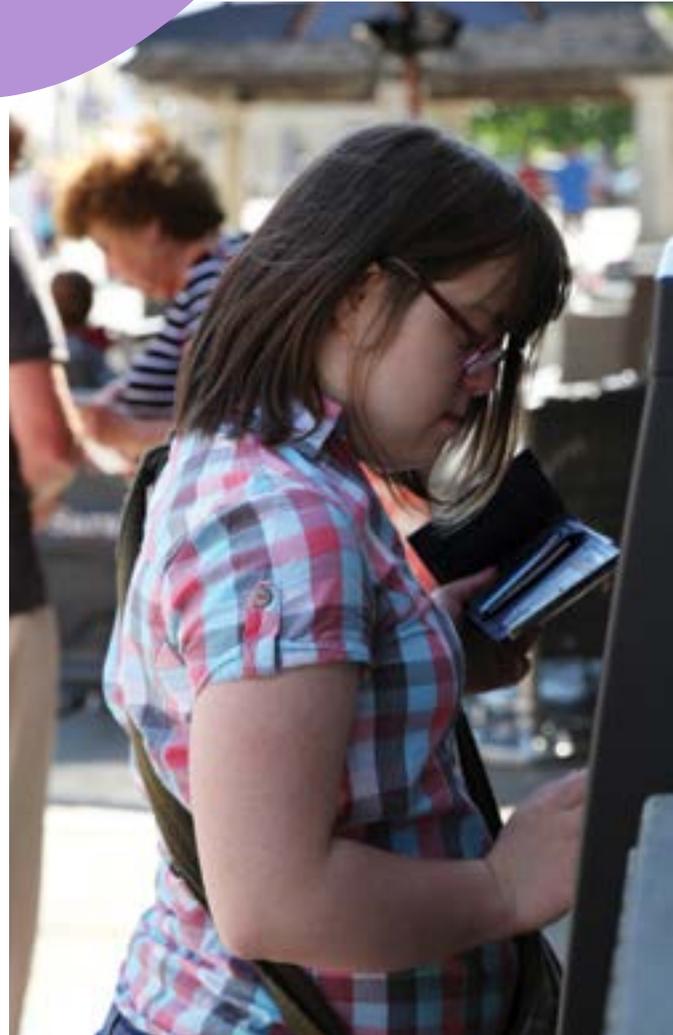
GLH will take out a lease directly with the owner. This will normally range from one to three years. GLH will then become the landlord and rent the property to the applicant who will be a tenant of GLH.

#### STEP 6 – Becoming a Golden Lane Housing tenant

The majority of GLH tenants are issued an Assured Shorthold Tenancy with a minimum term of six months which, can roll over on a periodic basis for as long as it is suitable for both the tenant and the property owner.

#### Specialist landlord services

GLH provides specialist landlord services to all our tenants – such as a 24-hour helpline, supports tenants to understand their tenancy agreement and responsibilities, ways to keep safe and advice on housing related benefits – bridging the gap between housing and support.





# Frequently asked questions

## **Can people live alone or share?**

Great Tenants is suitable for people who want to live alone or with others. If a person would like to share, their social worker should be able to help them.

## **What if support staff need a sleep-in room?**

We will look for properties which provide enough rooms and space for a person's needs, including staff sleep-in. This could be either for a person living on their own or sharing with others. In some cases where rent is paid by Housing Benefit, there may need to be a top up payment depending on benefit entitlement.

## **Condition of a property and how it is maintained**

GLH will not take on any property that does not meet our minimum standards, statutory checks carried out and arrangements for maintaining the property are agreed.

## **What about in an emergency?**

GLH has a 24-hour helpline, seven days a week where tenants or people who support them can report emergencies or emergency repairs.

## **You've already seen a house that you would like to rent, can GLH help?**

If you have already identified a property, you should get in touch with GLH quickly and we will investigate the possibility of renting it.

## **What happens at the end of the lease?**

If circumstances have not changed and the property is still suitable for the tenant/s, GLH can usually renew the lease with the landlord.

## **What happens if the property no longer meets the tenant/s needs?**

GLH has a move on procedure that involves the tenant and people who support them. Before a tenant moves on, GLH will try to do everything they can to help them find the right home to meet their needs.

# Tom, Lewis and Ryan's story

“We're best mates forever, and we love it here.”

Lewis  
GLH tenant

Tom, Lewis and Ryan lived in Golden Lane Housing (GLH) community homes while attending college. After college life they moved back to their parents in Cumbria, but all they wanted was a place of their own.

“Eden Mencap and social services put us in touch with GLH after we'd been let down by another housing provider. We were almost there too. It was a huge shock and a disappointment when it happened,” said Joy, Simon, Hazel, Michael and Patricia's parents. Tom, Ryan and Lewis started to get frustrated as they'd learnt all these independent skills at college, and started to go downhill really because they were not using them. That wasn't what any of us wanted.

When Peter from GLH came to see us we explained that Tom, Lewis and Ryan wanted to live in Penrith as it's central to all the families. He was honest and realistic, which we really appreciated. He explained it may take a while for the right property to become available as it's a rural location scattered with holiday homes, so we waited. We rang round the estate agents without any luck, we were feeling quite apprehensive about it all. GLH kept to their word, they rang to explain a property had been found which was down to local knowledge, and it hadn't come on the market yet. The property had been empty for a year and the developer was now doing it up but it wasn't quite ready. We jumped at the chance! The first time we viewed it we knew it was going to be perfect for them. We went back for a second viewing. The work was not far enough down the line to move in, however by the third viewing it was almost there.

For the first week after the move they had staff

sleeping in, this was reduced over the next four weeks and now they no longer need it. They are really enthusiastic, wanting to learn more skills so they can have less support in the future. What a difference in such a short space of time! They're all young lads in their twenties and having the time of their life, it's a real lad's pad. When we pop round, they tell us when it's time to go, we are handed our bags and coats.

This was what we wanted more than anything. How comfortable and confident they all are now, they're blossoming, it's magic to see. Just wonderful. It's a new house and environment, they'd not lived in this area before so they're getting used to the community and where everything is. Looking forward, the next step is to find some clubs and discos for them to go to, we'll have a look around Penrith and maybe in Carlisle too.”

Simon, Lewis' Father explains, “Lewis is really happy, it's everything me and Joy wanted for him. But, as a Father I do miss him being around, we have such a good laugh, and know the other parents miss their sons too. It means I get to spend a couple of hours with him before he's off out doing something else! This whole set up is fantastic and he's not going to be a 50 year old man stuck at home with us, instead he's getting out there and experiencing life. Now he's moved, we've got peace of mind for his future.”

**To contact Golden Lane Housing: call 0300 003 7007**

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