



INDEPENDENT LIVING PROJECT

CHAPMAN STREET

DRAFT MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY PLAN

Feb 2026



1.0 WHAT IS INDEPENDENT LIVING?

The Independent Living Programme is specifically aimed at providing good quality affordable homes for single young people aged between 18-25 (i.e. not couples or families), who have been homeless, are at risk of homelessness and wish to make the transition from supported housing; have limited or no support needs; have made the transition into employment or apprenticeship and are ready to live independently for the first time.

Independent Living homes provide medium-term accommodation and are not forever homes. They instead offer young people a stable platform to settle into work and learn to manage their own home before they naturally “outgrow” their Independent Living home in a sustainable manner, fully prepared for the next step in their lives. The intention is for a regular throughput of tenants, to ensure that Independent Living homes continue to provide a route out of supported housing for young people.

As a social landlord, Centrepont has a clear contractual relationship with its tenants over rent payments, property standards and conducting tenancies in a reasonable manner as explained in more detail below. We are also much more than a landlord and offer additional valuable services that support vulnerable people, and offer employment opportunities and investment in communities.

2.0 ALLOCATIONS / ELIGIBILITY

To ensure that the programme delivers outcomes for young people, Centrepont has developed the following broad criteria that will determine a young person’s suitability for the available Independent Living home. These criteria are summarised below:

Age and occupancy:

All applicants must be 18–25-year-old single young people who have experienced homelessness. The ILP (Independent Living programme) in Manchester is aimed at single occupancy only and is unable to accommodate couples or families.

Employment:

Applicants for properties and tenancies must, as a starting point, be either:

- 1) in full-time employment, or an apprenticeship, for a minimum of 30 hours per week, and be in a position to provide a reference from their employer; or
- 2) in employment or an apprenticeship working less than 30 hours per week, with written confirmation from their employer that their hours will increase to 30 hours per week or more, once their tenancy in ILP commences.

Only by having a regular income can young candidates pay their rent, sustain their tenancy, and learn to live independently.

Assessment and Feedback:

Each applicant will be assessed and interviewed to understand and evaluate their individual circumstances. This would include an assessment of their current living arrangement (i.e. whether it is recently left home, sofa surfing, staying with friends or family or living within

supported accommodation). The process will require the interviewer to conclude whether the applicant has very low or no enduring support care needs, is ready to live independently and understands what that involves.

If it is deemed that a young applicant is not ready for Independent Living, they will be provided with feedback on why they have been unsuccessful and will be invited to apply again when they have improved their readiness. We want to ensure that young people are prepared, and have the skills and confidence to succeed in Independent Living and to leave homelessness behind for good.

Arrears / Deposit / Rent:

As part of the transitional process, the Independent Living Programme initiates the responsibility of maintaining a basic obligation for the tenant to pay their rent to a landlord. In the first instance, applicants must have no rent arrears from their current accommodation and be able to evidence the skills required to budget and pay for their expected outgoings.

Once this requirement has been satisfied, good quality fully furnished homes can be provided at one third of the young person's gross annual salary. The maximum salary a young person can earn and live in an Independent Living home is £30,000. This means that the maximum rent per calendar month that the highest earning young person will never exceed the affordable market rate. Many young people will be on apprenticeships with salaries well below £30,000 per annum.

Further to this, Independent Living homes come fully furnished including cutlery, crockery, mattress, bedding, towels, toaster, kettle, microwave and washing machine. The rent is also inclusive of any service charge, but young people are responsible for paying their own utility bills and council tax. To ensure that this model remains fit for purpose and economically relevant, Centrepont will review the rent setting policy at least every 5 years or sooner if changes in legislation require.

Centrepont has undertaken an analysis of the local rental market for Gorton, focussing on available studio and one-bedroom apartments. This has identified that even the cheapest local comparison is £250 per month more expensive than the maximum rent that could be payable in an Independent Living unit, with these comparisons also likely to include an additional cost for furnishing, utilities and service charge.

Working young people will therefore not find a cheaper way to privately rent a good quality one-bedroom home in Gorton. Independent Living is a genuinely affordable and sustainable way for young people to hold down a job and establish financial security to save for a rent deposit to move on to their next home and leave homelessness behind for good.

3.0 PROPERTY / TENANCY MANAGEMENT

Terms of Tenancy:

We offer Independent Living homes on a minimum two (2) year Assured Shorthold Tenancy with a 12 month probationary period. Tenancies can be extended annually beyond the initial two year period up to a maximum of five years.

In our experience, many young people will move on within two years, with very few staying for the maximum five year period. In our largest Independent Living property at Reuben House (see Appendix 1 for more details), 13 young people have already moved on successfully to private housing from the 32 homes occupied (a rate of 29%) since the scheme's opening in April 2023. This ensures a regular throughput of tenants so that the ILP homes can continue to provide a route out of supported housing for young people.

Arrears Management:

Centrepont have an escalation-based process for arrears management. This offers a clear and established system and process to ensure that we are taking the right actions at the right time to prevent arrears increasing, and to take enforcement action when required.

Our action is prompt and proportional and geared towards solving the arrears and preventing the arrear growing. There will be some tenants who may struggle with rent payments from time to time, but our start point is that the rent must be paid on time, every time.

Centrepont employs a dedicated Tenancy Sustainment Officer who will be able to offer one on one support if the young person is struggling to manage aspects of their tenancy, including making rent payments, regularly and on time.

Property Maintenance:

The quality, condition and appearance of properties / estates is the first impression of how a landlord is managing their properties and whether we look after our properties and take pride in their appearance and in our services.

The homes of Independent Living developments will be maintained and repaired to a high quality by Centrepont. Contractual arrangements will be in place to keep all common areas and gardens clean, well maintained and safe for residents and the wider community. Issues like fly-tipping or vandalism will be quickly and pro-actively managed.

Centrepont also have a clear relationship with residents that sets out what our expectations and their responsibilities are. This includes looking after their home, common areas and our asset – regular inspections will take place and where individuals are responsible for vandalism through personal action or neglect then we will take legal enforcement action.

Each Independent Living development will have a dedicated Independent Living Housing Officer who will take the lead on managing people, property and place. They are responsible for tenancy management, managing and monitoring the condition of the property and managing the relationships with other residents, neighbours and stakeholders in the local community.

Tenancy support and sustainment:

Independent Living accommodation is not for residents requiring any level of enduring support (on or off-site) throughout the duration of the tenancy and young people will be in work and expected to pay their rent on time, maintain their home, and be a good neighbour and tenant.

However, the provision of information, advice, guidance and targeted, short term, enabling support can provide an important safety-net to try and enable residents to re-establish rent payments or change behaviour; offering residents an opportunity to get back on track, but not deflecting away from the basic premise of meeting the terms of the tenancy agreement.

We also offer health and wellbeing services to all residents to promote healthy lifestyles, recognising that this helps remove barriers and provides a foundation for successful outcomes at home, work and in personal relationships.

Independent Living Housing Officers are trained to help young people progress in work and advise on any difficulties they may face. If a young person falls out of work Centrepont's Employment and Skills team support them to return to the workplace. They will be visible, easily contacted and well managed to offer an integrated, locally focused housing management service.

Anti-Social Behaviour:

All Independent Living residents are required to sign a code of conduct which sets out clear expectations of behaviour and what their responsibilities are. The Centrepont approach to dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour is through early intervention and prevention, non-negotiable support and strong enforcement action when necessary.

We do this in partnership with other community stakeholders such as the local authority and Police and also with the local community to address the quality of life impacts. The focus of our casework is as much about supporting the complainant or witness of ASB as work around the alleged perpetrator. We have a zero tolerance to criminal behaviour and will always involve the Police and take legal enforcement action.

Fraud, illegal occupancy and sub-letting:

Tenancy fraud can be a hidden source of ASB and disproportionately impact on the local community. Affordable housing is a scarce resource and there will be real focus on carrying out due diligence checks and monitoring backed up by a rigorous and efficient legal enforcement process.

Safety and compliance:

Keeping our estates and properties safe is our first priority – all the required compliance and safety checks are properly carried out and recorded on all properties.

Centrepont has a record of 100% compliance with fire risk assessments and electrical safety inspections. No smoking is allowed in the accommodation or on-site outside of designated areas.

Waste and recycling:

Centrepont will always seek to implement a waste and recycling strategy that aims to maximise recycling opportunities. Residents will be required to sign a 'green pledge' and we will give a commitment to minimise the carbon footprint of the site through procurement and contract management.

Sustainable Transport solutions:

Centrepont actively discourages car use in our resident group and purposely identifies locations for their accommodation that are central and highly accessible. We actively promote the use of public transport. We will also providing adequate cycle storage.

Community engagement:

For Centrepont, good housing management is about taking a wider view of the area – looking at the property from a landlord, resident and community perspective. The community as a whole have a vital part to play in creating and maintaining neighbourhoods where we can all be proud to live and work.

We engage with statutory and voluntary agencies (Police, Local Authority, Social Care, local businesses and local community based organisations) where possible to assist in keeping safe and well maintained estates.

Independent Living Housing officers maintain high levels of visibility - regularly visiting and walking around their patches, talking to residents and the wider community, overseeing the safety and appearance of their estates.

Where neighbours or other stakeholders need to contact us to offer feedback, make complaints or request services, then we offer a clear line of communication via e-mail or phone. We aim to place decision makers as close as possible to service users so in most cases communication will be directly with the housing officer responsible. We will respond to all complaints and requests for service within one working day.

4.0 PROPOSALS AT CHAPMAN

Securing referrals / nominations rights:

Manchester City Council may wish to secure nomination rights for all 34 Specialist Housing Units at Chapman Street. To facilitate this, Centrepont propose that the rights would be secured under the following terms (as has been agreed through Section 106 Agreements on other Independent Living projects):

- 1) Process to be taken 6 months prior to the development opening:
 - a) 6 months prior to site handover, Centrepont to arrange communication with MCC Young People's Supported Housing Commissioning Team to commence discussions on eligibility and referrals;
 - b) 3 months prior to site handover, Centrepont and MCC Young People's Supported Housing Commissioning Team to commence monthly meetings to discuss referrals and pre-move in process. MCC Pathway Manager to send suitable referrals which meet the eligibility criteria to the Centrepont ILP Manager;
 - c) Centrepont to commence communications with young people referred as soon as referrals are received;
 - d) Centrepont ILP Manager will assess and process the referral within 3 weeks of receipt;
 - e) MCC will be given 2 months to fill all void units from site handover.

- 2) Process to be taken following opening of the development:
 - a) Any upcoming voids must be reported to the Pathway Manager, 4 weeks prior to the property becoming actually void;
 - b) The Pathway Manager will send a suitable referral which meets the eligibility criteria to the Centrepont ILP Manager, within 10 days of receiving notification of the upcoming void;
 - c) Centrepont ILP Manager will assess and process the referral within 2 weeks of receipt.
- 3) Applicants will be required to provide evidence of the following documentation either directly or through the Pathway Manager:
 - a) Passport or Birth Certificate;
 - b) National Insurance number;
 - c) If in employment, last 3 monthly wage slips and contract from their employer, stating hours worked per week;
 - d) If the young person has changed jobs, employment contract from both new and previous workplace;
 - e) Copies of the latest 3 months' worth of bank statements;
 - f) Permission to check that any applicant has proof of right to work in the UK;

Centrepont to have discretion as to whether or not to approve an 'Eligible Person' referred to them by the Council provided that Centrepont has acted reasonably in relation to the exercise of such discretion.

In the event that within 2 weeks following receipt of the notification referred to in points 1 and 2 above, the Council has not referred any Eligible Persons to Centrepont for approval, the Independent Living Units may be let by Centrepont to an 'Eligible Person' in accordance with the following order of priority:

- a) to Borough residents or persons who work in the Borough;
- b) to those who reside or work in Greater Manchester; and
- c) to UK-wide residents

APPENDIX 1 - CASE STUDY OF REUBEN HOUSE, SOUTHWARK

LB Southwark granted planning permission to Centrepont in February 2021 (Council ref: 19/AP/5380) for a scheme that delivered 33 no. modern self-contained modular apartments for young people at 54 Lugard Road, London SE15 2TD, each 19.5 sq. m in area and charged at one third of the resident's monthly wages.



The scheme (now known as Reuben House) began to be occupied from January 2023, was officially opened by the Prince of Wales in Summer 2023 and is fully occupied with all young people in work or apprenticeships.

In the first year there have been no evictions, no formal warnings, and no anti-social behaviour complaints. 13 young people have positively moved-on to their own properties (two into shared ownership properties and two via the social housing route).



A young person who recently left our Reuben House homes explains:



"Reuben House not only provided me with a safe place to sleep but also offered me a sense of hope and dignity during a challenging time in my life. The kindness and compassion shown by your staff and volunteers have made a profound impact on me, and I am forever grateful for your generosity. Thanks to your assistance, I am now on a path towards stability and independence."

Andrew, aged 22