

Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley Mind provides a supported housing service for 27 people who have experienced mental health problems and now need some support to live independently. Accommodation is provided in 5 sites in the area:

- Dartford:** a block of 8 self-contained flats near the centre of town
- Northfleet:** a block of 6 self-contained flats
- Gravesend:** a large house converted into 5 self-contained flatlets and also 2 self-contained flats within one house
- Swanley:** 6 self-contained flats within one house

Most of the schemes also contain a communal room where tenants can meet together if they wish. All the flats are for single occupation.

What tenants have said about the service:

**“It has helped enormously in assisting me to leave behind a great deal of emotional and material hardship.”**

**“It has given me hope, my own front door key, privacy in a comfortable environment.”**

**“The Mind way of supporting people is excellent.”**

## Living in DGS Mind accommodation

All vacancies are shorthold tenancies – which means that tenants living within them are expected to become independent enough to move on to general housing within two years. Everyone is encouraged to move to more independent settings when they are able to do so.

DGS Mind's Housing Service is funded by the government's Supporting People programme. The programme has given DGS Mind the highest grade A for quality for several years.

All flats are fully furnished and equipped. Rent payments are normally covered by Housing Benefit. Council tax will be in line with the local authority's council tax reduction scheme. Tenants pay their own utility bills to encourage independent living.

Each tenant works with the staff to create their own Support Plan. The plan identifies the person's needs and goals and how staff can help to meet these. Plans are reviewed every six months, or earlier at the request of the tenant.

All tenants have opportunities to take part in social activities and in meetings to plan and develop the service.

## Criteria to apply for accommodation

When vacancies do occur we notify the Community Mental Health Teams and other agencies who refer suitable candidates to us. People can self-refer providing they have involvement with the Community Mental Health Team.

To be considered for a flat a person must:

- Be over 18 and needing single person accommodation
- Have, or be recovering from, an enduring mental health problem
- Need the type of housing support we provide
- Need the type of housing we can provide
- Be able to use the supported housing service to make a positive difference in their life
- Not be a risk to the health, safety and wellbeing of other tenants.

When a person meeting these criteria has been referred to us, and where we have a vacancy, DGS Mind housing staff will send an application form, to be completed by the applicant.

Applicants for housing will be interviewed by 2 staff, who will make the decision on whether or not accommodation should be offered. It is our policy to offer a tenancy to the person who is in most need of the housing and support we can provide.

## Housing Support

DGS Mind offers low-level support to tenants which includes:

- Assistance with form filling (benefits, utilities etc.)
- Health and Safety checks and property maintenance
- Help with living skills and self-development through person-centred planning and support
- Liaising with the Community Mental Health Team if their mental health deteriorates
- Financial advice and budgeting
- At the tenant's request, and where appropriate, supporting them by attending meetings with other professionals
- Working to avoid isolation and promote social inclusion.

Mind tenants are also encouraged to access the range of other services we provide.

DGS Mind does not undertake:

- Personal care
- Shopping
- Domestic duties

For more information contact:

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## DGS Mind provides other services in a variety of locations in Dartford, Gravesham & Swanley:

### Community Services:

A wide range of open sessions, activity sessions, Coping with Life courses, self-development and support groups, mentoring, individual assistance, assisted volunteering, vocational and employment help.

### Psychological Therapies

Provided on behalf of the NHS: Counselling, CBT, Psychoeducation, Guided Self-Help, Group Work. Self-referral or referral via GP.

### Low –Cost Counselling

Individual counselling without rigid limits as to the number of sessions available, fees starting from £7.50 per session.

### Education:

Placements for social work students, mental health nurse trainees, and trainee counsellors. Mental health training sessions.

**All our leaflets are available in large print, Braille, or other formats, on request.**

In DGS Mind we are committed to continuously improve our services through quality review and service user feedback.

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[www.dgsmind.co.uk](http://www.dgsmind.co.uk)

**Dartford, Gravesham & Swanley Mind**

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# Supported Housing Service