

SECTION 5 — SUPPORT, INDEPENDENCE & LIFE SKILLS

POLICY 47 — LIFE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT POLICY

47.1 Purpose

Homeward Futures LTD is committed to supporting residents to develop the practical skills, knowledge and confidence required to live safely and independently.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a structured approach to life-skills development while recognising that every resident will have different abilities, experiences, strengths and support needs.

47.2 Scope

This policy applies to:

- All residents receiving support from Homeward Futures LTD.
- All staff involved in supporting residents.
- Life-skills activities delivered within accommodation or the community.

47.3 Policy Statement

Homeward Futures LTD will support residents to develop skills appropriate to their individual circumstances, including:

- Cooking and meal preparation.
- Cleaning and household management.
- Personal organisation.
- Managing appointments.
- Budgeting and money management.
- Understanding bills.
- Shopping.
- Laundry.
- Personal safety.
- Maintaining accommodation.
- Accessing community services.
- Education, employment and training.
- Digital skills.
- Communication.

- Healthy relationships.
- Problem-solving and decision-making.

Support will be person-centred and focused on developing independence rather than creating unnecessary dependence on staff.

47.4 Assessment of Life Skills

A resident's life-skills needs will be considered as part of their initial assessment and support planning.

Staff will identify:

- Existing strengths.
- Skills already developed.
- Areas requiring support.
- Areas where additional learning may be beneficial.
- The resident's own goals and priorities.

47.5 Life Skills Support

Staff may provide:

- Demonstrations.
- Practical guidance.
- Step-by-step instruction.
- Written information.
- Modelling of appropriate behaviour.
- Opportunities for the resident to practise skills.
- Encouragement and feedback.

Staff should progressively reduce support where the resident demonstrates increased confidence and competence.

47.6 Monitoring Progress

Progress will be reviewed through:

- Key-work sessions.
 - Support-plan reviews.
 - Resident feedback.
 - Observations.
 - Achievement of agreed goals.
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POLICY 48 — INDEPENDENCE & PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

48.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support residents to develop confidence, resilience, independence and personal responsibility.

Homeward Futures LTD aims to help residents make informed choices and develop the skills necessary to successfully transition into adulthood.

48.2 Policy Statement

Support will be:

- Person-centred.
- Strengths-based.
- Outcome-focused.
- Age-appropriate.
- Proportionate.
- Designed to encourage independence.

Residents will be encouraged to participate actively in decisions affecting their lives.

48.3 Personal Development

Residents may be supported to develop:

- Confidence.
- Self-awareness.
- Communication skills.
- Decision-making.
- Problem-solving.
- Emotional regulation.
- Time management.
- Goal-setting.
- Personal responsibility.
- Resilience.
- Self-advocacy.

48.4 Individual Goals

Residents will be encouraged to identify personal goals.

Goals may relate to:

- Housing.
- Education.
- Employment.
- Finances.
- Health.
- Relationships.
- Social activities.
- Personal development.
- Independent living.

Goals should be realistic, measurable and reviewed regularly.

48.5 Promoting Choice

Staff will avoid unnecessarily making decisions on behalf of residents.

Where appropriate, staff will:

- Explain available options.
- Discuss potential consequences.
- Encourage informed decision-making.
- Respect the resident's views.
- Support residents to learn from appropriate mistakes.

48.6 Progression

As residents develop greater independence, support should be adapted to reflect their progress.

The objective is to enable residents to manage increasing areas of their lives independently wherever safe and appropriate.

POLICY 49 — EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING & VOLUNTEERING POLICY

49.1 Purpose

Homeward Futures LTD recognises that education, employment, training and volunteering can play an important role in developing independence, confidence, financial stability and social inclusion.

49.2 Policy Statement

Residents will be encouraged and supported to access opportunities that reflect their:

- Interests.
- Abilities.
- Aspirations.
- Previous experience.
- Educational needs.
- Career goals.
- Personal circumstances.

49.3 Education

Staff may support residents with:

- Identifying educational opportunities.
- College applications.
- Course applications.
- Attendance.
- Study routines.
- Access to learning resources.
- Communication with education providers where appropriate.

49.4 Employment

Residents may be supported with:

- Identifying suitable employment.
- Searching for vacancies.
- Completing applications.
- Writing CVs.
- Preparing for interviews.
- Developing workplace skills.
- Understanding employment rights and responsibilities.
- Maintaining employment.

49.5 Training

Residents may be supported to identify appropriate training, including:

- Vocational courses.
- Apprenticeships.
- Skills courses.
- Accredited qualifications.
- Short courses.
- Other opportunities supporting employability.

49.6 Volunteering

Where appropriate, staff may support residents to identify volunteering opportunities.

Volunteering may help residents develop:

- Confidence.
- Communication skills.
- Work experience.
- References.
- Teamworking skills.
- Community connections.

49.7 Barriers to Participation

Staff will explore barriers preventing participation, which may include:

- Lack of confidence.
- Transport difficulties.
- Financial difficulties.
- Lack of qualifications.
- Digital exclusion.
- Previous negative educational experiences.
- Other individual circumstances.

Appropriate support or referrals will be considered.

49.8 Monitoring

Progress towards education, employment, training or volunteering goals will be reviewed as part of the resident's support planning.

POLICY 50 — FINANCIAL CAPABILITY & MONEY MANAGEMENT POLICY

50.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support residents to develop the knowledge, confidence and practical skills necessary to manage money responsibly.

50.2 Policy Statement

Homeward Futures LTD will support residents to develop financial independence while respecting their autonomy and privacy.

50.3 Financial Skills

Residents may be supported with:

- Understanding income and expenditure.
- Budgeting.
- Managing bank accounts.
- Understanding bills.
- Setting financial priorities.
- Saving.
- Avoiding unnecessary debt.
- Understanding contracts.
- Understanding payment arrangements.
- Recognising financial scams.
- Making informed purchasing decisions.

50.4 Banking

Where appropriate, staff may support residents to:

- Open a bank account.
- Understand online banking.
- Manage direct debits.
- Understand bank statements.
- Keep banking information secure.

Staff must never request or retain a resident's PIN, password or other confidential banking credentials.

50.5 Financial Exploitation

Staff will remain alert to potential financial exploitation, including:

- Someone taking a resident's money.
- Pressure to transfer money.
- Unauthorised use of bank cards.
- Coercion relating to benefits.
- Fraud.
- Online financial scams.

Concerns will be managed under relevant safeguarding procedures.

50.6 Financial Independence

Residents will be encouraged to take increasing responsibility for their finances as their skills and confidence develop.

POLICY 51 — BUDGETING, BENEFITS & FINANCIAL SUPPORT POLICY

51.1 Purpose

This policy establishes how Homeward Futures LTD supports residents with budgeting, benefits and access to appropriate financial support.

51.2 Benefits Support

Where appropriate, residents may be supported to understand and access relevant benefits and financial assistance.

Staff may assist residents to:

- Identify potentially relevant benefits.
- Understand application processes.
- Gather appropriate information.
- Access online systems.
- Contact relevant agencies.
- Understand correspondence.

Staff will not provide financial or benefits advice outside their competence and will refer residents to appropriately qualified organisations where specialist advice is required.

51.3 Budgeting

Staff may help residents develop a realistic budget covering:

- Income.
- Rent.
- Service charges.
- Food.
- Utilities.
- Travel.
- Mobile phone costs.
- Personal expenditure.
- Education or employment costs.
- Savings.
- Emergency expenses.

51.4 Financial Difficulties

Where a resident is experiencing financial difficulties, staff will seek to identify the underlying cause.

Support may include:

- Reviewing their budget.
- Identifying available income.
- Identifying unnecessary expenditure.
- Supporting benefit applications.
- Referring to specialist debt advice.
- Negotiating appropriate payment arrangements where applicable.

51.5 Debt

Residents experiencing significant debt may be encouraged to access specialist debt advice.

Staff will not provide regulated financial advice unless appropriately authorised and qualified to do so.

51.6 Financial Emergencies

Where a resident has insufficient funds for essential needs, staff will consider the immediate circumstances and whether safeguarding or emergency support is required.

POLICY 52 — COOKING, NUTRITION & HEALTHY LIVING POLICY

52.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support residents to develop healthy eating, cooking and household food-management skills.

52.2 Policy Statement

Homeward Futures LTD will encourage residents to develop the confidence and skills required to prepare nutritious and affordable meals.

Residents will be encouraged to make their own informed choices regarding food and lifestyle.

52.3 Cooking Skills

Staff may support residents with:

- Meal planning.
- Food shopping.

- Reading recipes.
- Food preparation.
- Safe use of kitchen equipment.
- Cooking methods.
- Food storage.
- Cleaning after cooking.
- Managing food budgets.

52.4 Food Safety

Residents will be encouraged to understand:

- Safe food storage.
- Appropriate cooking temperatures.
- Food hygiene.
- Cross-contamination.
- Use-by dates.
- Safe handling of raw food.
- Cleaning kitchen surfaces and equipment.

52.5 Healthy Living

Where appropriate, staff may encourage residents to consider:

- Balanced nutrition.
- Hydration.
- Physical activity.
- Sleep.
- Personal hygiene.
- Healthy routines.
- Mental and emotional wellbeing.

Staff will not impose personal lifestyle choices on residents.

52.6 Individual Needs

Staff should take account of relevant individual circumstances, including:

- Allergies.
- Dietary requirements.
- Cultural preferences.
- Religious dietary requirements.
- Medical dietary requirements where communicated appropriately.

Where specialist dietary advice is required, residents should be encouraged to seek advice from an appropriate healthcare professional.

POLICY 53 — HOUSEHOLD MANAGEMENT & CLEANING SKILLS POLICY

53.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support residents to develop the practical skills required to maintain a safe, clean and functional home.

53.2 Policy Statement

Residents will be encouraged to take responsibility for their living environment with support appropriate to their individual abilities.

53.3 Household Skills

Support may include:

- Cleaning.
- Laundry.
- Washing dishes.
- Using household appliances.
- Changing bedding.
- Managing rubbish.
- Shopping for household items.
- Organising belongings.
- Basic household maintenance.
- Understanding utility usage.

53.4 Cleaning

Residents should understand the importance of maintaining:

- Bedrooms.
- Kitchens.
- Bathrooms.
- Communal areas.
- Food preparation areas.

Staff may demonstrate cleaning techniques and provide practical support where required.

53.5 Laundry

Residents may be supported to learn:

- How to use washing machines.
- Appropriate washing temperatures.
- Sorting laundry.
- Using detergent safely.
- Drying clothes.
- Caring for clothing.

53.6 Household Safety

Residents will be encouraged to understand the safe use of:

- Electrical appliances.
- Cleaning products.
- Kitchen equipment.
- Heating systems.
- Other household equipment.

53.7 Developing Independence

Staff should avoid completing routine household tasks for residents where the resident is capable of doing them independently.

The emphasis should be on teaching and developing skills.

POLICY 54 — APPOINTMENTS & ACCESS TO SERVICES POLICY

54.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support residents to access essential services and progressively develop the ability to manage appointments independently.

54.2 Policy Statement

Homeward Futures LTD will encourage residents to take responsibility for arranging and attending their own appointments as their confidence and ability develop.

54.3 Appointments

Residents may require support with appointments relating to:

- Healthcare.
- Education.

- Employment.
- Housing.
- Benefits.
- Legal matters.
- Banking.
- Identification.
- Other essential services.

54.4 Support

Staff may support residents by:

- Helping identify the appropriate service.
- Finding contact details.
- Supporting residents to make appointments.
- Helping residents understand appointment information.
- Providing reminders where appropriate.
- Supporting transport planning.
- Accompanying residents where appropriate and agreed.

54.5 Confidentiality

Residents' personal information will be treated confidentially.

Staff will only share information with third parties where:

- The resident has provided appropriate consent.
- There is a lawful basis for sharing.
- Sharing is necessary to protect the resident or another person.
- There is a safeguarding or other legal requirement.

54.6 Developing Independence

Support should gradually reduce as residents become more confident in:

- Making appointments.
- Attending appointments.
- Communicating with professionals.
- Managing follow-up actions.
- Keeping records of appointments.

POLICY 55 — DIGITAL SKILLS & ONLINE SAFETY POLICY

55.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support residents to use technology safely and confidently.

Digital skills are increasingly important for education, employment, housing, banking, benefits and accessing essential services.

55.2 Digital Skills

Residents may be supported with:

- Using smartphones, tablets and computers.
- Email.
- Online applications.
- Online banking.
- Job searches.
- Education platforms.
- Government services.
- Video calls.
- Digital calendars.
- Document creation.

55.3 Online Safety

Residents will be encouraged to understand:

- Password security.
- Privacy settings.
- Online scams.
- Phishing.
- Identity theft.
- Financial fraud.
- Online exploitation.
- Social media safety.
- Appropriate sharing of personal information.

55.4 Passwords and Personal Information

Residents should be encouraged to:

- Use strong passwords.
- Avoid sharing passwords.
- Use multi-factor authentication where available.
- Keep banking information private.
- Avoid sending sensitive information to unknown people.
- Check that websites and messages are genuine.

Staff must never ask residents to disclose passwords, PINs or security codes.

55.5 Online Relationships

Residents will be encouraged to recognise risks associated with:

- Online grooming.
- Catfishing.
- Exploitation.
- Coercion.
- Sextortion.
- Financial scams.
- Harassment.

Concerns involving exploitation or safeguarding will be managed in accordance with relevant safeguarding procedures.

POLICY 56 — SOCIAL SKILLS, RELATIONSHIPS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

56.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support residents to develop healthy relationships, positive social networks and meaningful connections within their communities.

56.2 Policy Statement

Homeward Futures LTD recognises the importance of positive relationships and community participation in supporting wellbeing and independence.

56.3 Social Skills

Residents may be supported to develop:

- Communication.
- Active listening.
- Conflict resolution.
- Setting boundaries.
- Respectful communication.
- Teamwork.
- Self-advocacy.
- Problem-solving.

56.4 Healthy Relationships

Residents will be encouraged to understand:

- Respect.
- Consent.
- Personal boundaries.
- Equality.
- Trust.
- Healthy communication.
- Recognising unhealthy or abusive behaviour.

56.5 Community Engagement

Residents may be supported to access:

- Sports.
- Youth and community groups.
- Libraries.
- Volunteering.
- Education.
- Employment.
- Cultural activities.
- Hobbies.
- Local events.
- Other appropriate community opportunities.

56.6 Isolation

Staff should remain alert to signs that a resident may be socially isolated.

Where appropriate, staff may explore opportunities to increase positive social contact.

56.7 Safeguarding

Where staff become aware of relationships or social situations presenting a significant risk of:

- Abuse.
- Exploitation.
- Coercion.
- Violence.
- Criminal exploitation.
- Other safeguarding concerns,

the concern must be managed under the Safeguarding Policy.

POLICY 57 — MOVE-ON & TRANSITION PLANNING POLICY

57.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure residents are supported to prepare for and move into appropriate longer-term accommodation and greater independence.

Move-on planning should begin early and should be based on the resident's individual circumstances, readiness and goals.

57.2 Policy Statement

Homeward Futures LTD will support residents to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence necessary to sustain appropriate accommodation following move-on.

57.3 Transition Planning

Move-on planning may consider:

- Housing needs.
- Financial circumstances.
- Employment or education.
- Independent living skills.
- Support needs.
- Risk factors.
- Location.
- Social networks.
- Access to services.
- Resident preferences.

57.4 Preparing for Independent Accommodation

Residents may receive support with:

- Finding suitable accommodation.
- Understanding tenancy responsibilities.
- Completing housing applications.
- Understanding rent and bills.
- Budgeting.
- Setting up utilities.
- Purchasing household essentials.
- Understanding household responsibilities.
- Maintaining a tenancy.
- Managing appointments.
- Accessing community services.

57.5 Readiness for Move-On

Readiness should not be determined solely by age.

Staff should consider the resident's:

- Practical skills.
- Financial capability.
- Ability to maintain accommodation.
- Ability to manage appointments.
- Ability to access services.
- Emotional readiness.
- Support network.
- Individual risks.
- Personal goals.

57.6 Multi-Agency Planning

Where appropriate and with appropriate consent or lawful information-sharing arrangements, Homeward Futures LTD may work with:

- Local authorities.
- Personal Advisers.
- Social workers.
- Housing providers.
- Education providers.
- Employment services.
- Health professionals.
- Other relevant agencies.

57.7 Move-On Plan

A move-on plan should identify:

- Proposed accommodation.
- Target move-on date.
- Outstanding skills to develop.
- Financial arrangements.
- Support arrangements.
- Relevant risks.
- Key agencies involved.
- Actions required before move-on.

57.8 Preventing Homelessness

Homeward Futures LTD will aim to identify barriers to successful move-on at an early stage.

Where there is a risk that a resident may become homeless, staff will escalate the concern and work with the resident and relevant agencies to identify appropriate options.

57.9 Post-Move Support

Where appropriate and within the scope of the service, Homeward Futures LTD may provide reasonable transition support following move-on or signpost the resident to appropriate ongoing services.

57.10 Successful Transition

A successful move-on should aim to ensure that the resident:

- Has suitable accommodation.
- Understands their housing responsibilities.
- Has appropriate financial arrangements.
- Knows how to access relevant services.
- Has appropriate support contacts.
- Understands how to seek help if difficulties arise.

SECTION 5 — SUPPORT RECORD KEEPING & MONITORING

Homeward Futures LTD will maintain appropriate records relating to support and independence development, including where applicable:

- Initial assessments.
- Support plans.
- Life-skills assessments.
- Individual goals.
- Key-work sessions.
- Progress reviews.
- Education, employment and training goals.
- Financial capability work.
- Life-skills activities.
- Community engagement.
- Appointment support.
- Move-on plans.
- Referrals and signposting.
- Resident feedback.

Records will be:

- Accurate.
- Relevant.

- Factual.
- Updated appropriately.
- Stored securely.
- Managed in accordance with data protection requirements.

Residents should be involved in reviewing their progress wherever appropriate.

SECTION 5 — PERSON-CENTRED APPROACH

All support provided under this section should reflect the individual resident's:

- Strengths.
- Needs.
- Abilities.
- Preferences.
- Aspirations.
- Culture.
- Communication needs.
- Level of independence.
- Identified risks.

Homeward Futures LTD will avoid adopting a one-size-fits-all approach.

The purpose of support is not to complete tasks on behalf of residents unnecessarily, but to **teach, encourage and enable residents to develop the confidence and skills to manage their own lives.**

SECTION 5 — POLICY REVIEW

These policies will be reviewed:

- At least annually.
- Following significant legislative or regulatory changes.
- Following a serious incident.
- Following significant changes to the Homeward Futures LTD service.
- Where monitoring identifies a need for amendment.
- Following relevant feedback from residents, staff, commissioners or partner agencies.

The Manager is responsible for ensuring that Section 5 remains current, effective and appropriate to the needs of residents and the services provided by Homeward Futures LTD.