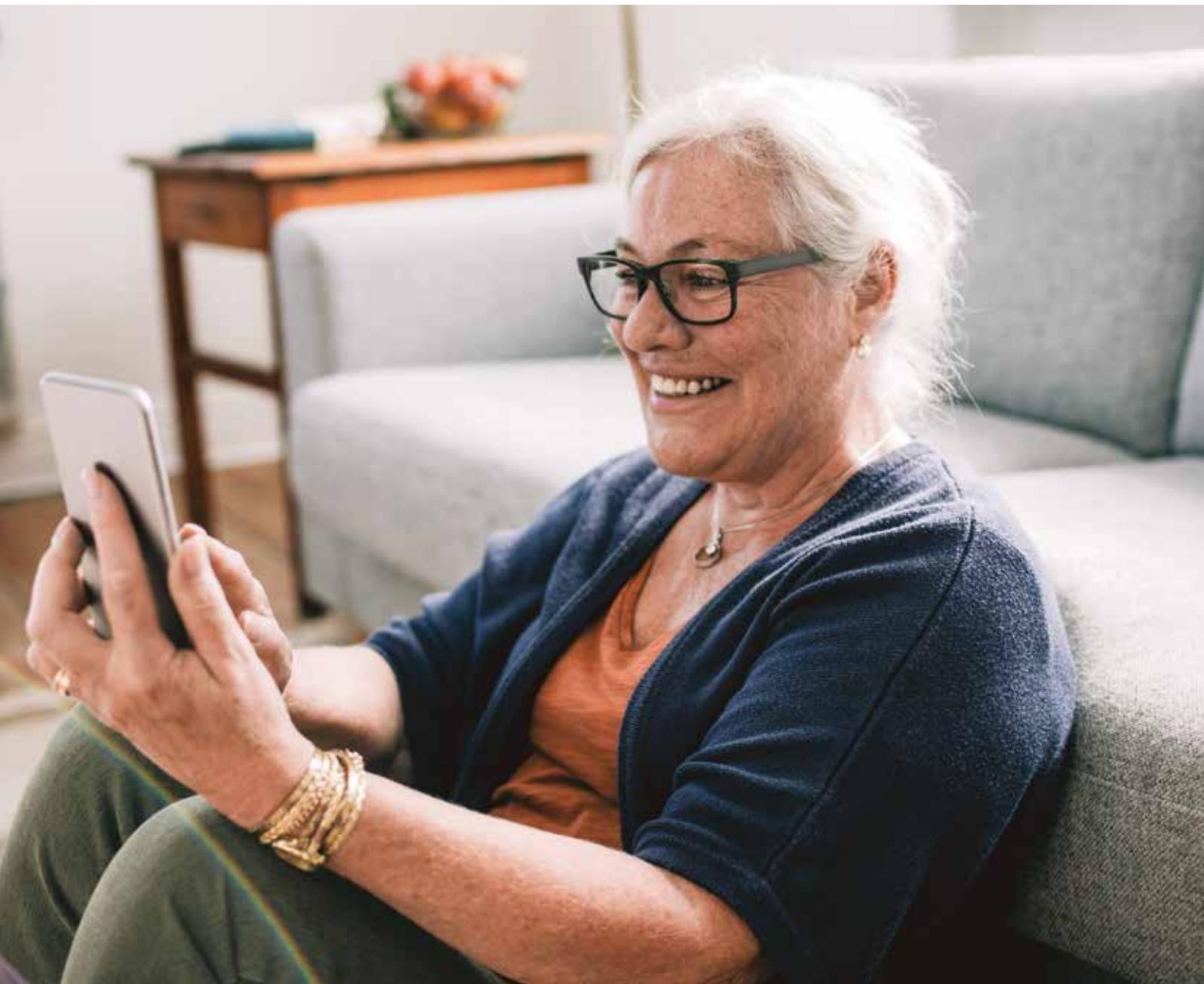


# Independent Living Handbook

Live your life the way you choose





## Contents

About us	5
What is Independent Living	7
The role of our Independent Living team	9
Health and wellbeing	10
Your peace of mind	11
Your safety	15
Thinking ahead	18
Getting in touch	19



**At Guinness Care,  
we make a difference  
by listening and  
responding to our  
customers' needs,  
helping them to live  
as independently,  
happily, and healthily  
as possible.**



# About us

## Guinness Care

In 2005, Guinness Care and Support Limited (now operating as Guinness Care) was founded as a charitable organisation, and is a subsidiary of The Guinness Partnership, one of the leading housing and care providers in England.

Today, we have around 800 members of staff and over 10,000 customers. We support older people living in their own homes, as well as those living in specialised housing including Extra Care schemes.

We also support adults with learning and physical disabilities in our Supported Living homes, and young people at our Sheffield

Foyer service. Our high quality care and support services include personal, complex and dementia care, domestic help, companionship, enablement and assistive technology.

At Guinness Care, we make a difference by listening and responding to our customers' needs, helping them to live as independently, happily and healthily as possible, and encouraging social connections.

## Our values

We strive to be a great place to work, with employees who are passionate about what they do. We believe that care is a service as well as a response to a need, and our five values are at the core of our social purpose:

**We're here to improve people's lives and create possibilities for them**

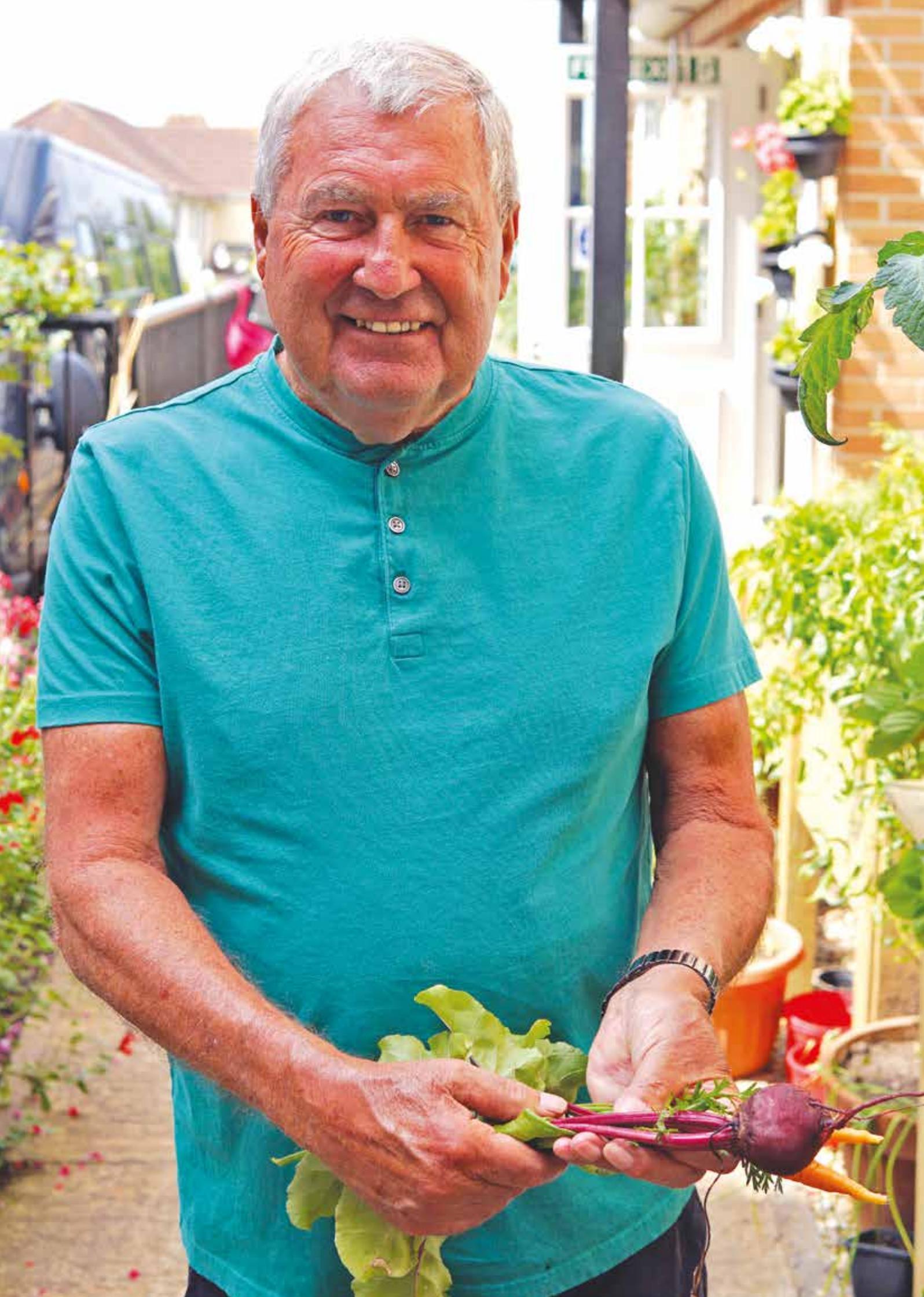
**Caring** putting individual wellbeing at the heart of what we do

**Accountable** for the services we provide and responsible for ourselves

**Respectful** of individuality, privacy and dignity

**Ethical** and professional - our reputation is key

**Dedicated** we want to exceed expectations



# What is Independent Living?

Live your life the way you choose, with the confidence that a helping hand is there if you need it.



Welcome to Independent Living (previously known as sheltered housing) where you can continue to live independently, maintain your health and wellbeing, and be connected to your local community.

Our service offers choice, flexibility, and is supported by technologies to provide you with a great place to call home.

## Listening to you

Our priority is to support your independence. To help you decide how we can do this, one of our dedicated Independent Living Advisors (also known as an ILA), will visit you in your home for an informal chat.

We will get to know a little bit more about your needs, and how we can help you maintain and enjoy your tenancy. We can provide you with help to suit your needs and, if necessary, we can also assist with referrals to other services and agencies that will benefit you.

## How we can support your independence:

### Responding – meeting your needs

- Initial and periodic home visits to assist you in settling into and managing your tenancy.
- Ensuring that you are getting all the benefits and entitlements that you are eligible for.
- Supporting you to manage bills and household budgets.
- Provision of technology that supports 24 hour emergency assistance.
- Getting repairs done or making changes to your home to match your health needs.

### Sustaining – health, wellbeing and social connections

- Advising on building/personal safety and security.
- Help in establishing social contacts and activities.
- Providing opportunities for you to join in with fellow residents.
- Help in arranging and accessing activities.
- Engaging with the local community.

### Enabling – through Guinness or other Agencies

- Planning for support or care to enable you to remain independent at home.
- Assistance in accessing other services such as health and adult social care.
- Signposting to services for advice and assistance with complex benefit issues; debt management; furniture, fuel and food poverty.
- Providing guidance, if you're worried about your memory or other health concerns.
- Finding other accommodation where necessary.



# The role of our Independent Living Team

Our Independent Living Advisors are there to be your first point of contact, provide you with information to get the service you need and to help with any requests or questions you may have.

They receive regular training so they can stay up-to-date with best practice in their work, and be able to help you in the best way. Whether you need advice on repairs, or to contact a doctor, they will be able to help you.



## Our Independent Living team will always:

- Provide you with a service based on your needs and wishes.
- Listen to what you want that will help you to live independently.
- Provide you with accurate information.
- Be aware and respectful of your culture and beliefs.
- Encourage you in your independence and health and wellbeing both as an individual and as part of your community.
- Respect your rights to confidentiality, privacy and dignity.
- Provide you with a service that is accountable and professional always acting with honesty and integrity.

## Our Independent Living team are unable to:

- Provide personal care
- Help you with medication
- Accept or process payments from you on behalf of Guinness (but they can advise you on how to do this instead).

# Health and wellbeing

We know there are huge benefits in being active and increasing connections within the local community. Our Health & Wellbeing Coordinators work closely with the Independent Living Advisors to develop activities which focus on:

- **Digital inclusion:** Accessing and using technology confidently.
- **Intergenerational:** Forming and nurturing links with local children or young people.
- **Community hubs:** Creating strong and lasting links to the wider community.
- **Volunteering:** Developing opportunities to get involved.

In 2018, we launched our Health & Wellbeing Fund, which offers grants to support events, activities or items that are seen to improve our customers' wellbeing.

We work in partnership with a range of groups delivering established activities such as exercise classes. Please do always feel welcome to join in whatever your age or mobility – everyone is welcome!

If you'd like to become involved in social activities and local events, your Independent Living Advisor can help you find these activities, help you with transport, or even help organise activities of your own.

## What else can we help you with?

We want to work with you to build a vibrant community. We can help arrange for other providers to visit and give useful information on topics such as fire safety, preventing falls, safety in the home and health and wellbeing. Please do let us know if you have any ideas on activities we can run.



# Your peace of mind

## Moving house

We know it can be stressful moving, which is why within your first two weeks we will visit you to see how you're doing. If you'd like to chat to us before then, just give us a call when you're ready. We can then discuss your requirements and how we can better support your independence.

## Alarms and pendants

All of our Independent Living homes come with a fixed alarm service, for use in an emergency. If you'd like the added peace of mind of a pendant, this will not only work in your home, but also the surrounding communal areas. At a touch of a button, you can be connected to a 24/7 specialist contact centre for support in the event of an emergency.

To enable you to get the most out of your pendant, remember:

- To always keep your pendant safe, and wear it at all times when in your home.
- If you lose or break your pendant, we will replace this. If it happens regularly, we may need to charge you for the replacement.
- To leave your pendant at home if you're going away or going into hospital.

## What happens when I activate my alarm?

Once your alarm is activated, there may be a short wait before your call is connected to a specialist 24/7 contact centre (the centre is a third-party provider, and not part of Guinness). They will run through a few questions with you, and get you the support you need. In the situation that you cannot speak, an ambulance may be called to check on your welfare.





## What type of alarm system will I have?

Currently, we are trialling a variety of alarm systems throughout our Independent Living properties, to try and find the best quality service for you. When you move in, we will run through how your system works, and inform you of any plans to change the existing system.

## Mobility scooters

Mobility scooters are a great way to help you get around more comfortably. In some of our properties, we have rooms where you can safely store and charge your scooter.

Please refrain from storing it in the corridor, near an exit in communal areas, or under communal stairs, this is due to fire regulations and to help keep you and your neighbours safe.

## Aids and adaptations to your home

Should your needs change, you may find you need some adaptations or aids added to your home such as a grab-rail, or walk-in shower. In these circumstances, our Independent Living Advisors can support you, and, where necessary, arrange for an assessment to be carried out if required.

## What if I have to go away or into hospital?

We know you will have times when you are not at home, such as going on holiday, day trips or appointments. Please let us know in advance by calling us on the number provided or by activating your alarm system and letting the response centre know.

Sometimes, you may need to go into hospital unplanned. If the emergency services are called, the alarm response centre will let us know.

If one of our Independent Living Advisors is with you when this occurs, they will help you to collect items to take with you, such as medication and clothing. They will also make sure your home is secure and close family or friends are contacted, if you wish.

It's important that we are informed when you're discharged from hospital, so our team can understand whether your needs have changed. It is also a good opportunity to see if we need to introduce any aids or adaptation to your home.

If you need help getting home from hospital, please do let us know.

## Championing inclusion and diversity

We believe that everyday inclusion is about creating a culture where everyone feels they belong, can be themselves, and can share their views and ideas.

Our commitment is embedded in every aspect of our business, and our diverse and inclusive environment are part of what makes Guinness so special.

## Communal spaces

Communal areas provide a great way to meet other people, socialise, and welcome the wider community. Most of our properties have communal lounges, where social and leisure activities take place. This space can also be used to celebrate family birthdays or events.

We also have communal laundry rooms on many of our sites for you to use.

It may also be possible for a friend or relative to stay in a guest room. Please contact your Independent Living Advisor for pricing and guidelines.



# Your safety

## Fire safety

As part of your moving in process, you will be made aware of the fire safety plans for your home.

We have fire risk assessments for all of our buildings and take all necessary actions to protect your safety.

Where necessary, we will also carry out a personalised fire risk assessment for you.

In the event of a fire, please activate the fire alarm system and/or your alarm system.

## Out of hours emergency

Out-of-hours personal emergency contact is available through your alarm system and the response centre if you activate it. The response centre will hold details of the next of kin and/or key-holder you have nominated so please make sure that you keep these up-to-date by letting us know if anything changes.

If the response centre cannot make contact or if you don't have key contacts, the operator will identify which service to call and will phone the emergency services to attend.

## Reporting repairs in your home

The Guinness Customer Service Centre is available for reporting any repairs or other concerns relating to your tenancy 24/7 including any out-of-hours emergencies.

If possible, you should report your own repair as you will be the best person to provide all the relevant information. If you need help to report it, then your Independent Living Advisor who will be happy to do it with you or on your behalf.

You can report a repair online 24 hours a day through your customer portal, **MyGuinness**. It's easy to register online, and your Independent Living Advisor can walk you through it, if you wish.

You can also call us to book a repair on **0303 123 1890** from 8.00am to 8.00pm, Monday to Saturday (and 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for emergency repairs).

If you have hearing, or speech difficulties, you can use our text relay on **18001 0303 123 1890**.

Emergency repairs include loss of power or water, no heating or hot water in winter, a flood or leak that can't be contained, doors or ground floor windows that aren't secure, your only toilet being broken, lift not working, etc. We'll fix or make safe within 24 hours.

If it isn't an emergency repair, we aim to get it fixed for you within 28 days but we'll always come out sooner if we can.

## Preventing crime

The following precautions are simple and practical measures you can take to protect yourself and your home:

- Always secure your windows and doors especially when you are going out or going to bed.
- Be vigilant of anybody calling at your door or on the scheme door entry system and only allow people into the building or your home if you know who they are or are satisfied that they are authorised to be there. Always ask to see ID and do not let anybody in if you have any doubt about who they are or what they are calling for.
- Take care that people don't follow you in to the building when you are letting yourself in the main entrance door.
- Close your curtains and blinds and turn on a light before going out for the evening.
- Keep your valuables out of sight.

If you use a fob attached to your property keys, we strongly advise you not to write your name or address on it in case you lose it.

## Keeping you safe

We want to help make living in your home an enjoyable and fulfilling experience. However, we recognise that sometimes people may experience abuse or mistreatment from people they know, relatives or strangers. If this is happening to you or to someone you know, we are here to help.

Abuse is when someone does something to another person that hurts them, damages their quality of life or puts them at risk of harm. It can be a criminal act or something done consciously or unconsciously. It can happen once or more often.

Abuse can take many forms and can include any of the following:

- Physical abuse.
- Emotional abuse – threats and bullying.
- Financial abuse – taking or using another person's money or belongings without their permission.
- Sexual abuse.
- Institutional abuse – in a health or social care setting, care home, hospital, etc.
- Domestic violence.

If someone is behaving to you or someone else in a way that you don't like or you are worried about, please let us know so that we can help you.

## Accidents

If you discover that an accident has taken place and somebody is injured, please call the emergency services. If you are still unsure, activate your alarm system/pendant and tell them what has happened. Never worry about being a nuisance; we are here to help or advise you at all times.



## Your rights and responsibilities

### **You have the right to:**

- Tell us what works and what doesn't work about the service so that we can continually improve what we do.
- Be consulted before any significant change in the way the service is delivered.
- Be treated with respect by all Guinness colleagues and to have your views considered.
- Feel you are part of a culture which champions diversity and inclusion, where everyone feels like they belong, and can be themselves.
- Have a service from us focused on living independently and to choose the frequency of contact that you get from us.
- Have a 24-hour alarm contact service to ensure your safety and security.
- Receive useful information about your choices from Guinness colleagues or contact someone who can help where we cannot provide information.
- Know how to complain or make a compliment about the service.
- Be supported in accessing services, social and leisure activities, religious and cultural organisations.

- Have visitors and to receive family and friends and have them treated with respect.
- Involve yourself in our service using formal and informal ways of making your views heard.
- Make a complaint about the service and receive a reasonable response to your complaint within set timescales.
- Make decisions around your own care and support.

### **In return, we ask that you:**

- Let us know what we do well and what we could do better.
- Help us to understand your needs and let us know when they change.
- Pay any charges due for the service.
- Treat our colleagues with the respect that you would expect to be given in line with our Customer Behaviour Charter which is available separately on request.
- Don't give gifts to our colleagues, we don't expect to receive hospitality, and due to our gifts and hospitality policy we cannot accept them. We would prefer it that you recognise us by a complimentary call, email or letter.

# Thinking ahead

## Planning for the future

### **We are happy to help you:**

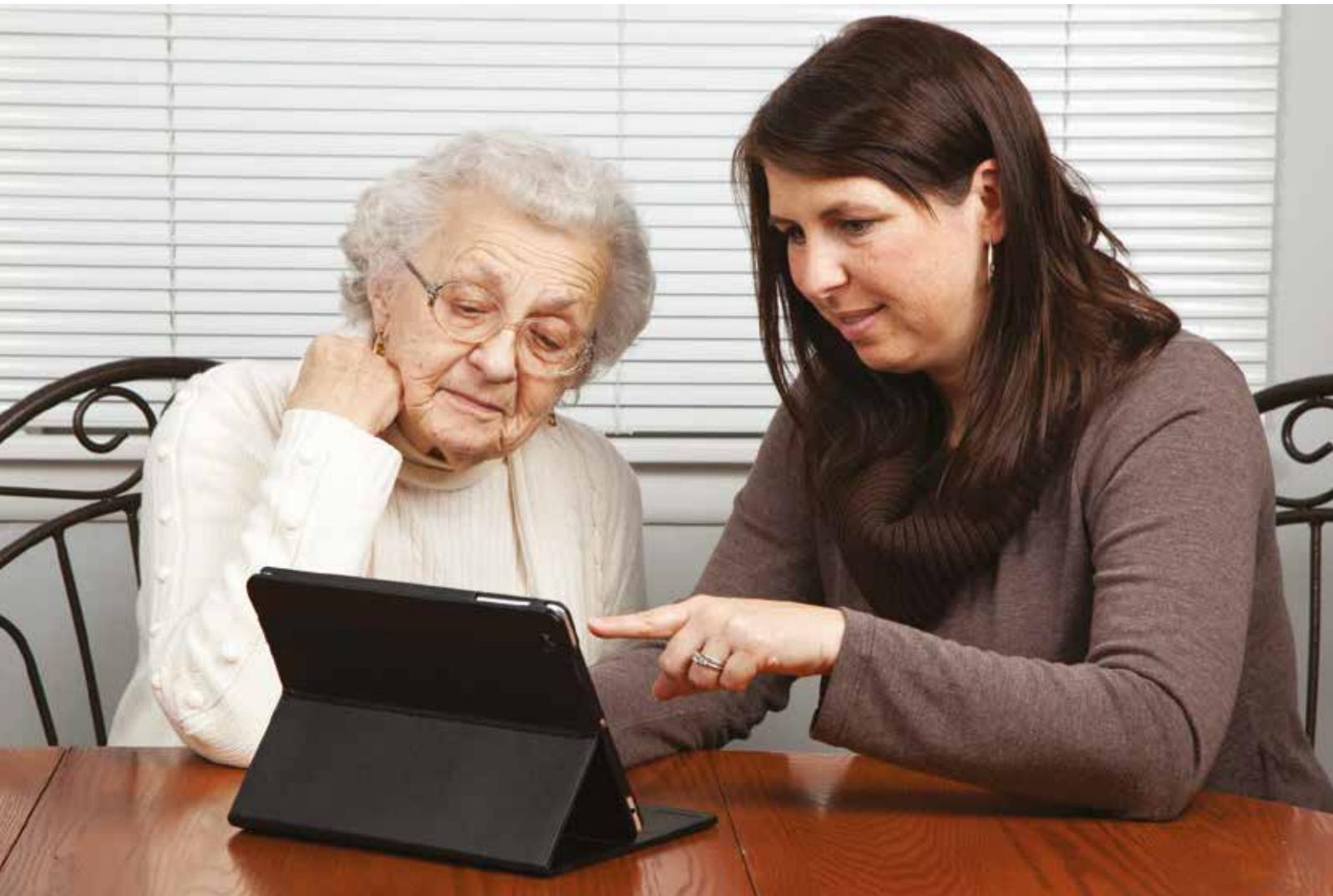
- Plan what you want or might need for the future.
- Make a smooth transition to new services.
- Arrange personal care in your own home from Guinness or another care provider.
- Advise you regarding housing alternatives such as extra care housing if you think that you may need it.
- Get advice on making plans for the future or after bereavement.

## Leaving our service

### **You may want to leave our service because:**

- You are moving in to different accommodation.
- You are relocating to be closer to family and/or friends.

We require 4 weeks' notice of you leaving, and we will help you where possible to plan for your move.



# Getting in touch

We welcome all feedback, and are keen to hear if we've got things wrong or done particularly well. All of your comments or complaints help us learn, and continually improve our service.

Please use the contact details below to tell us how we're doing; we will always update you following a comment or complaint:

@ [wecare@guinness.org.uk](mailto:wecare@guinness.org.uk)

☎ 0303 123 1890

🖱 [www.guinnesspartnership.com/care-service](http://www.guinnesspartnership.com/care-service)

✉ 30 Brock Street  
London  
NW1 3FG

## Contacting your Independent Living Advisor

Your Independent Living Advisor will provide you with their email address and mobile phone number so you can contact them in a way that suits you. If they are unavailable, (and your enquiry is urgent) you can contact your Independent Living Manager.

## Keeping us up-to-date

It's important that the details we hold about you are up-to-date. Please make sure you let us know if your personal information changes, so we can get in touch with you if needed.

We hope you enjoy living independently with Guinness Care.

**great service  
great homes  
a great place to work  
and a great business**



30 Brock Street, London NW1 3FG  
wecare@guinness.org.uk | 0300 123 0705  
[www.guinnesspartnership.com/care-services](http://www.guinnesspartnership.com/care-services)  
[www.guinnesscareathome.org.uk](http://www.guinnesscareathome.org.uk)

Guinness Care and Support Limited is a charitable Community Benefit Society No. 30337R Registered in England, a Registered Provider of Social Housing No L4497, and regulated by the Care Quality Commission. Registered in England and is Registered Provider of Social Housing No. 4729.

Issued October 2019