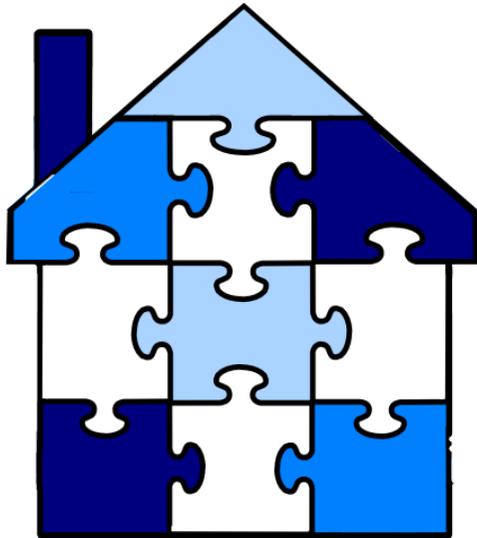


people realising  
their potential



# North East Housing Support Services



## Client Handbook

**Out of Hours Telephone Service**

**07939 038126**

Monday to Friday 5pm to 11pm

Saturday, Sunday, Bank Holidays 10am to 11pm

**CALLS ONLY - TEXTS ARE NOT ACCEPTED**

DISC is a Company Registered in England, Registered Charity No 515 755,  
Registered Company No 182 0492, Registered Social Landlord (RSL) 4713



# Welcome

Welcome to DISC Housing Support. We hope that this booklet provides useful information and guidance about the service you are receiving.

You've already met your Project Worker who will work closely with you to assess your needs and help you to decide how to move forward.

## Other Formats Available

This handbook is available in a range of different formats. Please ask your Project Worker if you would like this handbook in another language, large text or an audio version. It can also be produced in a range of colours for people who may benefit from this because of a sensory or learning disability.

You can contact DISC about any aspect of your support on:

**01325 731160**

Or by using our text service:

Text HOUSING to **80800** followed by your message.

Your Support Worker is: \_\_\_\_\_

Their mobile is: \_\_\_\_\_

Best wishes,  
Steve James - Operations Director of Housing Support

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## **What is DISC?**

DISC (Developing Initiatives for Support in the Community) is a charity established in 1984 working across the North of England.

## **Housing Support Unit**

This unit is part of DISC, and provides housing related support services, including Floating Support, the type of service you are receiving.

Floating Support is a short term support service helping people get skills, experience and confidence to live independently. We aim to provide a good quality service helping people keep their home and achieve their potential.

## **Who do we support?**

The Housing Support Unit helps:

- People who have been homeless or are a rough sleeper
- Ex offenders and people at risk of offending and imprisonment
- People with mental health problems
- People at risk of domestic violence
- People with alcohol and/or drug problems
- Teenage parents
- Older people
- Young people
- People with HIV/AIDS
- People with learning difficulties
- Travellers and asylum seekers
- Homeless families with support needs

## **Who pays for support?**

The service is free to use, and is paid for by the National Supporting People program which provides housing related support services to over 1.2 million people.

Ask your project Worker for more information or contact your Council.

## **How we allocate our service fairly**

Referrals received are awarded a priority band by the Gateway Team based on support needs on the Referral Form; written confirmation is sent with an expected waiting time. Each service in the North East has a different set of priority bands, but the information set out below is a typical example.

### **CRISIS**

Applicant faces imminent threat of eviction by landlord

Applicant is currently homeless

### **HIGH**

Applicant will imminently take on increased housing independence, or has recently done so

Applicant faces a clear threat of eviction but this is not yet imminent

### **MEDIUM**

Applicant needs support to develop independent living skills

Applicant needs support to develop 'life skills' to reduce risk of offending / anti-social behaviour

Applicant needs support to help manage finances

Applicant has independent accommodation which is no longer appropriate and requires support to move to alternative independent accommodation

Applicant needs support to manage mental health

### **PRE TENANCY**

Pre-tenancy applicant who is not imminently about to move into more independent accommodation

Letters are sent confirming the allocated worker and appointment details to commence support.

Our Allocations Policy is available upon request.

# Your Support Package

## What will my Project Worker do?

Everyone receiving the service has a Project Worker (sometimes called a Support Worker). They will talk with you about the help you'd like and agree a Support Plan showing how this will be achieved. They will visit you regularly, usually in your home.

Your Project Worker will help you to be independent and build up a support network. They will guide and help you do things like filling in benefit forms and work or training applications.

Your Project Worker will help find out about local events, things to do, community groups, education, training and employment services. We can help find services for things that DISC doesn't provide, and help you get in touch with them. Lots of these agencies are listed at the back of this booklet.

## What will my support include?

Support is based on your needs but could include support with:

- Making phone calls to agencies
- Understanding your tenancy agreement
- Debt problems
- Developing budgeting skills
- Benefit and grant applications
- Getting help with healthcare
- Linking in with other services, family, friends
- Sorting out home repairs
- Handling letters and forms
- Moving into a property, getting furniture and utilities
- Getting in touch with other organisations including specialist services for mental health or substance misuse issues
- Developing skills to find work and training
- Accessing places of worship
- Accessing legal advice
- Out of hours help when needed

## What you can expect from us

Our 'Code of Conduct Policy' describes how staff should support you safely and professionally. This includes the things staff should and shouldn't do - known as '*professional boundaries*'.

Professional Boundaries protect you and our staff. They are important as we visit you at home, often alone. The information on the previous page tells you how staff should support you. It is important that you also know the things our staff should *not* do:

- Take or borrow money from you, give or lend you money
- Accept or give gifts
- Have a personal relationship with you, being friends or having a sexual relationship
- Have contact via Facebook, Twitter, etc.
- Meet or contact you outside working hours
- Ask you to sign things you don't understand
- Take control of things you can do yourself
- Provide 'Care' services, like washing or dressing
- Abuse you in any way. The types of abuse are listed on the next page; they include physical, sexual, emotional, financial abuse or neglect
- Unlawfully discriminate against you
- Harass you in any way

The Safeguarding Section in this handbook tells you more about abuse, and the things we do to keep you safe. These include training our staff, properly supervising them and checking their work.

If you think your Project Worker may be breaking Professional Boundaries, talk to Clare Singlewood, Project Manager on 01325 731160.

Our 'Code of Conduct Policy' is available on request.

## **What we reasonably expect of you**

As already mentioned, our staff will often visit you in your home alone so it is important that you behave in a certain way in order to keep our staff safe.

DISC expects that:

- Meetings with your Project Worker take place in private unless otherwise agreed in advance
- You do not attend meetings under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- You do not behave in an aggressive manner towards your Project Worker. This may include swearing, threatening behaviour, violence or harassment

Your Project Worker will discuss this further with you when you agree your support plan.

# Keeping Yourself & Others Safe

## What is safeguarding from abuse?

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and is about services working together to lower the potential for abuse of adults and children.

Abuse is when harm is caused, a person's rights are violated, or when harm isn't stopped. There are different kinds of abuse including physical, emotional, financial, sexual and neglect.

- **Physical abuse** could include hitting, pushing, pinching, shaking, misusing medication, restraint and hair pulling
- **Emotional abuse** could be threats of harm, being stopped from seeing people, humiliation, controlling, being scared, harassment, hurtful words
- **Financial abuse** could be theft, fraud or exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance, possessions or benefits
- **Sexual abuse** could be rape, sexual assault, or sexual acts that haven't been agreed to, pressurising someone into sexual acts they don't understand or feel they can't refuse
- **Neglect** could be ignoring care needs, preventing access to health, care or education or withholding food, drink and heating, not looking after someone properly

Adults and children can experience abuse, and abuse can be caused by anyone - a family member, partner, carer or someone else.

## Who should I contact if I'm worried about abuse?

- If you, or another adult or child are in danger now, call the police on 999
- Otherwise, if you're concerned about yourself, another adult or child, call one of the following depending on your area:
  - Darlington Social Care on 01325 346200, 08702 402994 or text 07826 903165

- County Durham Social Care Direct on 0845 850 5010
- Middlesbrough Social Care on 01642 726004 or 08702 402994
- Stockton Social Care on 01642 527764 or 08702 402994
- You can also talk to your DISC Support Worker, or Clare Singlewood, Project Manager on 01325 731160

## **What support will I get if I'm worried about abuse?**

Our staff are trained to listen to concerns about safeguarding and support you to link in with services that can help. This might be by contacting the Council's Safeguarding Team, filling in a CAF (Common Assessment Framework) form to get extra support, or sharing information with services you are in touch with.

We'll keep you informed about what happens after this. In nearly all cases we will ask you to agree to us sharing information, but sometimes we must share even without consent to protect you or others from abuse. Your Project Worker will talk to you about when we might do this.

## **How do we make sure the service is safe?**

- All staff have Disclosure & Barring Services (DBS) disclosures
- We train and supervise our teams so that staff work safely with you, help you recognise and respond to abuse
- Our staff will help you reduce risks to you and others
- We have a clear Complaints Policy, and will tell you how to complain.
- The work of our teams is checked by Project Managers, DISC's Quality Team and the Council's Supporting People Team

If you'd like to know more, are worried or would like to complain, please contact Clare Singlewood, Project Manager on 01325 731160. If you'd prefer to speak to someone outside DISC, please choose from the Safeguarding Adults and Child Social Care numbers at the beginning of this section.

# **Your Support Plan and Risk Assessment**

## **What is a Support Plan?**

Your Support Plan will record your goals, who will help you achieve them and the date you want to achieve them by.

At our first meeting we will discuss with you the support you need. We may also involve other organisations who are supporting you to agree the best way forward.

Your Project Worker will meet with you regularly to review progress and update your Support Plan. You can request a review meeting of your support plan at any time.

## **What is a Risk Assessment?**

We will complete a Risk Assessment with you when you start to receive support from DISC.

This will cover the risks faced by you, and any risks you pose to our staff and the wider community.

The purpose of working with you to identify risks is to help you to lower and manage these risks and live independently in the community.

If the risk of visiting your home is high, support may be offered away from your home. If we can't find a way to safely support you because of risk we may withdraw the service. This is very rare, but if it happens you will have the right to appeal this.

# Confidentiality and Data Protection

## Confidentiality

We work closely with other services to support you well, and protect you and others.

This means that sometimes we need to share information. In nearly all cases we'll ask your permission. Sometimes we might need to share information to keep you or others safe, even without your permission.

We will ask you to complete a Consent to Share Information form when we start supporting you.

We have an Information Sharing Protocol which sets out the way we will share and obtain information with referral agencies. A copy is available on request.

## Data Protection

We comply with the Data Protection Act 1998 which sets out how we should hold and use your information. This means the information we hold about you will be:

- Needed for us to support you
- Not used for anything else than delivering the service
- Kept up to date and only kept for as long as needed
- Kept safe in locked cabinets, or held safely on computers

For more information please ask your Project Worker for our Confidentiality and Data Protection Policy.

You are entitled to view the information we keep about you at any time. If you would like to view your file, please make a request in writing to:

DISC, Sapphire House, IES Centre, Horndale Avenue, Newton Aycliffe, County Durham, DL5 6DS

## **Complaints and Other Feedback**

We like to hear what you think of the service as it helps us make sure it's as good as it can be. You can provide feedback by phone, email, letter, text, or in person, or you can use the tear off slip at the back of this handbook. Contact your Project Worker, Clare Singlewood - Project Manager or Steve James - Operations Director. If you would like to complain to someone outside of the service, contact the Council's Supporting People Team.

### **Complaints**

We aim to give an excellent service but know sometimes things go wrong. If you are unhappy with the service please tell us. A manager will investigate your complaint and we will try to make things right and will keep you informed.

If you like, we'll help you complain, or someone else can help you. If you're not happy with the outcome of your complaint you can ask us to look at the decision again (called an appeal). We will tell you more about this when you make a complaint.

Please ask your Project Worker if you would like a copy of our Complaints Policy.

### **Compliments**

If you feel we've done something really well and would like to let us know then please do. If you wish we'll pass your comments through to your Project Worker.

### **Comments**

We welcome ideas about how to change or improve. We look at comments regularly and make changes based on these. See Service User Influence and Involvement on the next section for information about getting involved.

# Service User Influence and Involvement

We'd like service users to be involved in how the service is delivered. We value your ideas and want you to have a voice and lead the way on how we provide our service to benefit you.

Please pass suggestions or comments about the service to your Project Worker or use the tear off slip at the back of the handbook.

You can also join groups and take part in things like:

- Contributing to our newsletter
- Helping us interview new staff
- Looking at the way we work to help improve the service
- Completing our questionnaires
- Any other way you feel you would like to participate

Please speak with your Project Worker if you would like to be involved.

## Equality and Diversity

DISC aims to ensure that nobody is treated less favourably because of their gender, age, marital status, disability, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sexuality or religion.

We believe people are Individuals with different needs, but should be treated equally. Everyone should have the same chance to access the service based on their needs, and should all receive a high quality service.

We will not discriminate against you or treat you less favourably than anybody else because of something to do with your 'individual characteristics' which are the things that make you unique.

If you feel that you have been discriminated against, please follow the Complaints Policy. If you feel you have been discriminated against by another person or organisation, please inform your Project Worker and they will be able to advise you on the best action to take.

For further information about Equality and Diversity please ask your Project Worker for a copy of our Equality and Diversity Policy

Please speak with your Project Worker if you would like an easy read version of the Equality Act 2010.

## Useful Contacts



### Accommodation

*For information about emergency accommodation and supported housing, please contact your local council:*

#### Councils

Darlington Borough Council - 01325 388542

Durham County Council Housing Solutions:

Durham, Wear Valley, Sedgfield and The Dales - 03000 260 801

Chester-le-Street, Derwentside, East Durham - 03000 268 840

Hartlepool Borough Council - 01429 266522

Middlesbrough Council - 01642 245432

#### Housing Associations (*this list is not exhaustive*)

Accent North East - 01642 231414

Endeavour - 0800 980 9050 / 01642 796200

Four Housing - 0191 3841122

Guinness Northern Counties - 0191 2736233

Home Group - 0845 6063030

Housing 21 - 0370 192 4000

Housing Hartlepool - 01429 525252

Johnnie' Johnson Housing - 0845 305 5335 / 0345 305 5335

Places for People - 0800 4320002

Railway Housing Association and Benefit Fund - 01325 482125

Tees Valley Housing - 08000 461600 / 01642 261100

Three Rivers - 0300 00 44 444

Two Castles - 0800 085 1171 / 0300 123 1747

## Women's Refuges

Darlington - 01325 364486

Middlesbrough - 01642 225969

Durham - 0191 3753689

Peterlee - 0191 586 8890

## **Advice & Information**

### **Citizens Advice Bureau:**

#### County Durham

Barnard Castle - 01833 631486  
256999

Chester Le Street - 0844 4111444

Durham - 0844 4111444

Newton Aycliffe - 01388 825429

Peterlee - 0191 5862639

Spennymoor - 01388 825429

Wear Valley - 0844 4111444

#### Darlington

Darlington - 01325

#### Tees Valley

Hartlepool 01429 273223

Middlesbrough - 0844 4994110



## **Dentists, Doctors and Hospitals**

For health advice, local dentists, doctors and hospitals, contact 111

Richardson Hospital, Barnard Castle - 01833 696500

Bishop Auckland General Hospital - 01388 455000

Darlington Memorial Hospital - 01325 380100

University Hospital of North Durham - 0191 3332333

University Hospital of Hartlepool - 01429 266654

James Cook University Hospital, Middlesbrough - 01642 850850

North Tees & Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust - 01642 617617

Shotley Bridge Community Hospital - 0191 333 2333

West Park Hospital, Darlington - 01325 552000

# If you need medical help fast, but it is not life threatening – call

**NHS**

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## What is ?

If you need medical help fast but it's not a life-threatening situation, you can now call the new NHS 111 number. When you call 111, a trained adviser will ask you questions to find out what's wrong, give you medical advice and direct you to someone who can help you, like an out-of-hour doctor or a community nurse.

If the adviser thinks your condition is more serious, they will direct you to hospital or send an ambulance. If you don't speak English, tell the adviser what language you want to speak and they will get you an interpreter. You can call 111 any time of the day. The call is free, from landlines and mobiles.

## When do I use it?

You should only call 999 in an emergency – for example, when someone's life is at risk or someone is seriously injured or critically ill.

Call 111 if you need medical help fast, but it's not life-threatening – for example, if you:

- think you need to go to hospital
- don't know who to call for medical help
- don't have a GP to call
- need medical advice or reassurance about what to do next

For health needs that are not urgent, you should call your GP.

If a health professional has given you a number to call for a particular condition, you should continue to use that number.

## Who can use it?

The NHS 111 number is currently only available in certain areas of England.

If you're outside of these areas, you should call NHS Direct on 0845 4647.



**when it's less  
urgent than 999**

## More information

For more information on where the NHS 111 service is available or to get this leaflet in other languages, visit [www.nhs.uk/111](http://www.nhs.uk/111)



## Furniture Schemes

### County Durham

DISC Furniture Scheme - IES Centre, Horndale Avenue, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 6DS - 01325 731160

County Durham Furniture Help Scheme - Unit 20, Avenue 3, Chilton Industrial Estate, Ferryhill, DL17 0PB - 01388 721 509

East Durham Partnership - 1 Kilburn Drive, Sea View Industrial Estate, Horden, Peterlee, SR8 4TQ - 0191 586 8493

Woodhouse Close Church Furniture Project - Proudfoot Drive, Bishop Auckland, DL14 6PD - 01388 602 935

Consett YMCA - 4c Linden Park, Number 1 Industrial Estate, Consett, DH8 6SZ - 01207 588302

Haswell Mencap Furniture Enterprise - 11 Church View, Haswell, DH6 2EA - 0191 526 0957

### Darlington

King's Church Furniture Re-Use Scheme - King's Centre, Whessoe Rd, Darlington, DL3 0QT - 01325 469 884

FRADE - 14-16 Leadenhall Street, Darlington, DL1 1RD - 01325 357379

### Tees Valley

FRADE - 47-49 Wilson Street, Middlesbrough, TS1 1SA - 01642 245927

Settlement (Furniture) Services Ltd - Moreland Street, Hartlepool, TS24 7NL - 01429 272272

Hartlepool Credit Union - 3-5 Avenue Parade, Avenue Rd, Hartlepool, TS24 8BB - 01429 863542

YMCA Shop - 100 Raby Rd, Hartlepool, TS24 8DJ - 01429 861055

## Police

*Need the police? Dial 101 any time it isn't 999*

*101 makes it quicker and easier to contact the police when you don't need an emergency response. For example:*

- if you've had a minor traffic accident*
- if your property has been vandalised*
- if your car has been stolen*
- if you suspect drug dealing*
- if you've witnessed a crime*
- if you've seen a missing person*
- if you need crime prevention advice*
- if you want to speak to a local police officer*

*101 replaces all local police station numbers with one easy-to-remember number, which you can use to contact police anywhere in the country.*

*101 is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.*

*It costs a flat rate of 15p per call from landline and mobile networks, no matter what time of day or how long you are on the phone.*

*Using 101 should make the police more accessible while reducing pressure on the 999 system.*

*Deaf, deafened, hard of hearing or speech-impaired callers can access the service via **TextRelay** on **1 800 1 101**.*

***In an emergency always dial 999 - when someone is in danger, a crime is in progress or a suspect is nearby.***



## National Helplines

### Addiction

**Alcoholics Anonymous** - 0845 769 7555 *Support with drink problems*

**Drinkline** - 0300 123 1110 *Information and self-help about own drinking and support for family and friends*

**Narcotics Anonymous** - 0300 999 1212 [www.ukna.org](http://www.ukna.org)

**FRANK** - 0300 123 6600 *Call to talk about drugs or alcohol*

**Gamblers Anonymous** - [www.gamblersanonymous.org.uk](http://www.gamblersanonymous.org.uk)

### Advocacy

**National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS)** - 0808 808 1001  
*Information to children and young people about their rights enabling them to use formal complaints procedures and have a voice when decisions are made*

### Bereavement

**Cruse Bereavement Care** - 0844 477 9400

### Contraception and Sexual Health

**Brook** - 0808 802 1234 *Free and confidential sexual health advice and contraception to young people*

### Debt Advice

**National Debtline** - 0808 808 4000 *Free, confidential and independent advice on how to deal with debt problems*

### Eating Disorders

**Beat** - 0845 634 1414 *Information on of eating disorders*

## Employment

**ACAS** - 08457 47 47 47 *Information, advice, training, conciliation and other services for employers and employees to help prevent or resolve workplace problems*

## Learning Disabilities

**Mencap** - 0808 808 1111 *Working with people with a learning disability, their families and carers*

**British Dyslexia Association** - 0845 251 9002 *Information and advice surrounding dyslexic issues*

**National Autistic Society** - 0808 800 4104 *Impartial, confidential information and advice for people with autism spectrum disorders and their families and carers*

## Obsessions

**OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder) Action** - 0845 390 6232 *Support for people with obsessive compulsive disorder. Includes information on treatment and online resources*

**OCD UK** - 0845 120 3778 *A charity run by people with OCD, for people with OCD. Includes facts, news and treatments*

## Panic and Anxiety

**No Panic** - 0800 138 8889 *Support for sufferers of panic attacks and OCD. Offers a course to help overcome phobia/OCD*

**Anxiety UK** - 08444 775 774 *Support if diagnosed with anxiety*

## Parenting

**Family Lives** - 0808 800 2222 *Information for parents, carers and families via a range of services including a free 24-hour confidential helpline, workshops, courses, information leaflets*

**Gingerbread Single Parent Helpline** - 0808 802 0925 *Advice, practical support and campaign for single parents*

## Relationships

**Relate** - 0845 456 1310 *Relationship support for individuals, couples and families*

## Travel

**National Rail Enquiries** - 0845 748 4950 *Information and promotions; train times; fare enquiries*

**Traveline** - 0871 200 2233 *Public transport information*

## Utilities

**National Gas Emergency** - 0800 111 999 *Report a gas or carbon monoxide emergency, or if a pipeline is struck*

**National Electricity Emergency** - 0800 40 40 90 *If you spot a potential hazard on or near an overhead electricity line*

**National Gas UK** - 0870 608 1524 *Find out current gas supplier*

**North East Regional Electricity Distribution** - 0845 601 3268 *Find out current electricity supplier to a property*

## Victim Support

**SurvivorsUK** - 0845 122 1201 *For adult male survivors of rape or sexual assault*

**Rape and Sexual Abuse Helpline** - 0808 802 9999 *For women and girls that have been raped or sexually abused*

**Victim Support** - 0845 30 30 900 *Help you find the strength to deal with what you've been through*

**National Domestic Violence Helpline** - 0808 2000 247 *Women experiencing domestic violence, family, friends, colleagues and others calling on their behalf*

**Men's Advice Line** - 0808 801 0327 *Advice for men experiencing domestic violence and abuse*

**National Stalking Helpline** - 0808 802 0300 *Information for anybody affected by harassment or stalking*







# Have Your Say

## Praise, Positives & Progress

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## Things to develop

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## Suggestions for improvement

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Date:

Name *optional*:

Project Worker Name *optional*:



# Handbook Receipt

Your Worker should have talked you through key sections of this handbook which are important for you to know.

Please tick each box to confirm that your worker has explained the following:	Yes	No
What a complaint is and how you can complain to us		
How to keep yourself and others safe, this is called Safeguarding		
The kinds of information we hold about you and how you can access it		
What the out of hours service and how you can access it		

Please sign and date in the space below and tear off this slip to pass to your Worker. This will let us know that you understand what's in this handbook and that a copy has been left with you.

Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

----- *please tear along this line* -----

## ***Tear off this slip to pass to your Project Worker.***

Your Worker should have talked you through key sections of this handbook which are important for you to know.

Please tick each box to confirm that your worker has explained the following:	Yes	No
What a complaint is and how you can complain to us		
How to keep yourself and others safe, this is called Safeguarding		
The kinds of information we hold about you and how you can access it		
What the out of hours service and how you can access it		

Please sign and date in the space below and tear off this slip to pass to your Worker. This will let us know that you understand what's in this handbook and that a copy has been left with you.

Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_