

At Home

News for Accessible Properties Tenants

July 2016

Sian starts a new life as a tenant

Sian Humphreys will always need 24-hour support with all the basics because of her disability, but that hasn't stopped her moving into her own flat.

Sian has a condition called Angelman Syndrome and until recently she was living at home in Ngaruawahia, where her parents mainly provided the around-the-clock help she needed.

But in June, Sian moved into her own place in Hamilton. Her Dad, Peter Humphreys, says they were looking for a new kind of living situation for Sian – one that allowed her more freedom, and one that allowed them to step back a bit.

"We didn't want residential care. We wanted a flatting situation or shared care or boarding situation," he says. "We still want to be massively in her life, but we need time out.

"I approached Accessible Properties about 14 months ago to try to establish what there was in the form of accommodation for somebody like Sian," Peter says. "I was surprised to learn that she was just as eligible as anybody else to become a tenant.

So we put her name down on the waiting list and informed Accessible Properties what Sian's requirements were. We then approached MSD for an assessment of Sian's eligibility for social housing with income-related rent. Sian was high up on the list and we waited for a disability-friendly property to come up."

Accessible Properties Tenancy Manager Val Johnston worked with Peter to have her housed through the MSD housing register.

"We want her to have a life," Peter says. "I just want her to have a type of house that she can turn on the TV and not have someone turn it off."

Peter says Sian, who may never reach the landmark life events that their other children will, now has the opportunity to start a life that will be as independent as she is able to manage.

"We will still be the main caregivers for Sian, however we can now begin the next stage of sharing her care so that Sian gets used to other caregivers in her life. Without a home of her own this would not be possible. So a big thank you to all those who helped to make this happen."



Sian Humphreys tries out the keys to her new Hamilton flat.

Here is one for the fridge

With this issue of the newsletter we are including a fridge magnet so that you always have our essential numbers at your fingertips.

Remember the after-hours emergency number is for repairs only. For all other inquiries, please call your tenancy manager.

You can also email us at info@accessibleproperties.co.nz or go online accessibleproperties.co.nz



Winter time – and the living is easy

Maria Reo suffered a series of strokes 10 years ago that left her in a wheelchair. She can no longer walk because of the weakness in her left side, which throws her off balance.

She had to leave her private rental in Hamilton because it wasn't accessible – her wheelchair couldn't fit through the bathroom door.

But worse was to come. Maria ended up exchanging her home for a cold, damp granny flat in a converted garage with the heater going all the time.

"It started to leak and I got them in to have a look. I said it wasn't dry – the water was running down the wall." But Maria says the property manager was not prepared to do anything about it.

"It wasn't very long before I moved out of there to here. I couldn't handle it anymore."

In September last year Maria was finally able to move into an accessible unit in Whitiora, Hamilton, and living has suddenly got easier.



Maria Reo is loving being warm this winter.

"In the other place, I would get a cold and that would be me for the rest of the season. Here I am lovely and warm all the time."

Maria needs help with personal care and meals these days, but her daughter Raima lives only five minutes away and it's easy for her to drop in every day to help her Mum.

She lives in one unit in a four-unit complex that was built in 2013. The units have two bedrooms, with level access, widened doorways and hallways, internal access garages and outdoor patio areas.

Jamie feels safe enough to sleep

Jamie Hoffman is blind, has cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair – that made him an easy target for thieves and attackers at his old Housing New Zealand flat in Christchurch.

Jamie's flat had been broken into repeatedly and his possessions – including a wheelchair van – stolen and trashed. The wheelchair hoist still sits in the garage after two years while he waits for a replacement van.

The intruders would come into his flat while he was out, but also when he was there.

"They would come in quietly, and I was none the wiser," Jamie says. They took his television, his food – "you name it, they went through everything". He was also subjected to physical violence by people who knew he was unable to defend himself. Sometimes, he says, they would watch for him to come home and try to see the numbers he was putting in on his door keypad.

"I was even too frightened to go out sometimes."

After an approach by CCS and the Police, Accessible Properties found him a safer place to live. "He was living in a really dangerous area of town," says Tenancy Manager Renee Wills. "His safety was at risk daily."



Jamie Hoffman feels safer in his new home surrounded by neighbours.

Jamie, 37, moved to a two-bedroom unit in another part of Christchurch, a year ago. It's located in a group of units, and his flat is away from the street for extra safety. "He has had no issues at all – loves it – and is out and about daily," Renee says.

Jamie says he is sleeping better and feels a lot safer surrounded by neighbours who "keep an eye out. I haven't had any disturbances since I have been here". He is now working on a plan to start his own business managing transport for people with disabilities.

Tips for tenants

Transferring?

If you want to transfer to a new residence, you will need to apply in writing to your Tenancy Manager. Transfers are possible only if the home you are in is not suitable for your housing needs. Transfers will take place if and when a suitable home becomes available.

Water rates

Please make payment to the correct bank account on your metered water invoice. If you are having trouble paying your water invoice, please contact your Tenancy Manager for alternative payment arrangements.

Rubbish – right time, right place

Please make sure that you put your rubbish at the kerbside in the correct council-approved bin or bag on the correct day.

Who do you call?

After-hours emergency number 0800 223 359

The after-hours emergency number is for urgent repairs and maintenance. If you call after-hours for a non-urgent repair, you may be charged the call-out fee. If you have locked yourself out and need a locksmith you will be charged for the call-out.

Please do not call this emergency number for tenancy enquires, or to leave a message for your Tenancy Manager.

To contact your **Tenancy Manager** please call **0800 862 769** – and choose from the menu options.

Other useful numbers

Call for free, confidential help:

Bond information: **0800 737 666**

Tenancy advice: **0800 836 262**

Budgeting advice: **0508 283 438**

Legal help: **communitylaw.org.nz**

Citizens Advice Bureau: **0800 367 222**

Talk to us

We want to hear your feedback. If you want to talk to us about your tenancy, or have a comment about an Accessible Properties staff member, please email

info@accessibleproperties.co.nz

or write to: General Manager, Accessible Properties, PO Box 1974, Wellington 6140.