

Tenant Sustainment Officer (TSO) case studies – July 2022

1. TSO recently intervened in a case with a single, working age male who lives in a multi storey flat and has learning difficulties. This was a long standing case having assisted him in making a Personal Independence Payment (PIP) claim back in November 2020. This claim was refused but TSO kept on with case, picking it up at vital points throughout 2021 by ensuring a mandatory reconsideration was input (Again was refused by DWP) and also support tenant by explaining to him what was going on as he struggled to understand the processes. TSO input the appeal and because of the nature of the case, being hard to prove and the TSO's belief in the award, they enlisted the help of a Welfare Rights appeal tribunal representative. Eventually the case was heard recently over the telephone and both TSO and appeal rep attended telephone tribunal and tenant was successfully awarded PIP at the enhanced rate of daily living and standard rate mobility. This was a financial increase of £116.85 per week but also a back date of £8686.34 going back to the start of his claim. This has allowed tenant to not only manage increasing cost of living on a weekly basis but the backdate has allowed him to improve the quality of his life and has decorated his flat and bought essentials. This correct award, that would not have been possible without TSO involvement, has made this tenants life better and more manageable. His rent account is also clear and he paid off an FTA in full.
2. Another case saw a TSO support a female tenant after she had lost her husband due to illness. As well as the huge upset of losing a loved one, the tenant had also lost her carer as late husband was also her carer. TSO worked with tenant and assisted her in successfully claiming UC, got her claim up and running. As part of his process the TSO also managed to successfully get an extra bedroom included for an overnight carer. This meant that the social sector size criteria was reduced from 25% 14% SSSC. This identification by the TSO not only saved the tenant money but also gave her great peace of mind in what was an emotional time for her. TSO was able to shoulder the burden of getting the UC claim setup so that whilst tenant was grieving important tenancy matters were dealt with – allowing the tenant to keep on top of her finances. The TSO involvement in this case gave the tenant one less thing to worry about. TSO also went above and beyond by involving See and Solve to look at adaptations to assist tenant with her disabilities.
3. TSO currently working with a tenant who they came across whilst working on the landlord portal. Tenant in question was coming from a homeless situation following a relationship breakdown. Tenant moved with nothing in terms of essential possessions and as such would struggle to make a success of his tenancy. Tenant has quite severe mental health problems and is prone to coming across quite aggressively. Despite this TSO in question has used her interpersonal skills and developed a relationship with tenant. It has proved massively helpful to tenant to just have a constant point of contact. Tenant has received a starter pack through HSG (household support grant), white goods and furniture have been arranged via a charity and TSO has got actively involved in resolving energy supplier problems so that vital safety checks can be done in order for tenant to move in. TSO has shown empathy and listened to the tenant which has built up trust but also diffused any angry feelings. An example of this was TSO helping tenant to avoid a situation at the jobcentre by making a quick phone call. TSO has looked after details in this case and helped a vulnerable person successfully start a tenancy.
4. Area TSO has had lots of dealings with a vulnerable (And large family of 7 who came to the UK from Romania) family for over 6 months. TSO has overcome a language professionally and sensitively by being very clear and using translators. TSO initially gave help getting family a gas and electric supply sorted at their home – again with help of translator. TSO helped this family make arrangements to pay rent by APA from their universal credit (Housing element direct to landlord). Rent has been paid in full and in credit. TSO also made referral to CAB for specialist immigration advice for partner who missed the deadline for pre settled status. Tenant has

now pre-settled status. This is highly specialised help and needed to be sourced out to trained professionals in that area. TSO also made an application to Yorkshire Water Community Trust for arrears £650 and is currently awaiting the outcome of this request. TSO helped this family claim council tax reduction and asked for backdate to July 2021 which was awarded and crucially court action was avoided. We also helped family to claim child benefit with a 3 months backdate request for youngest child – which was successful. TSO is currently exploring PIP with one family member which could also remove current benefit cap restrictions. We managed to get a crisis grant from the local assistance scheme £172.00 for food and gas/electric. Last Christmas the TSO managed to get an emergency payment from universal credit which was initially refused – for £1500. On another occasion the families universal credit stopped because their journal was not updated with correct details. TSO supported the family with several emails and phone calls to universal credit and once decision made the emergency payment was paid the same day and got the claim back into payment. This helped the family out of a serious crisis because they had no money for food or utilities. Housing support grant, food £100 Winter clothing £50 Fuel £49 was also obtained through TSO support. TSO has also helped with translating documents/priority bills with the family and done some vital budgeting work with them. TSO has liaised closely with the Early Years Team regarding school attendance with the children and housing issues – all of which have improved. TSO assisted with a benefit calculator enquiry to help advise following tenant receiving a job offer. I gave them advice regarding benefit cap etc. Support continues from TSO with this family and it is evident from all of the above that TSO has a huge impact and a positive experience with this family.

5. Another TSO picked a case up of a tenant who had moved into a new home via a direct let is on a direct let. The tenant involved suffers with PTSD. TSO assisted him with the move and tenant expressed that TSO involvement has made his transition easier. It also answered a member enquiry. TSO secured tenant a starter pack to help setup a new home and has also obtained him a cooker via a detailed charity application. TSO has also applied to the covid support fund for carpets and is awaiting a decision. TSO gave tenant a detailed explanation of how his benefits are affected during the period of moving which eased tenants stress and he expressed feeling better informed as a result of TSO advice. Tenant has rang TSO a couple of times to make TSO aware of how grateful he is and how he didn't think he would have coped if it were not for TSO's contribution – results that say it all!
6. TSO received a referral for a single father who had recently gained full time custody of his two children. Tenant had recently moved into a two-bedroom property and required help setting up a home. TSO interviewed him and identified need and as a result made referrals to charities for help with furniture. Grant Giving Consortium awarded £450 for carpets, Mother Humber awarded £350 for a cooker and bedroom furniture for himself, Robbie Keane was able to support with a fridge freezer. I also managed to get his children a cot bed and mattress and a single bed and some toys – these were all essential to his ability to practically setup a home with a limited income. The tenant in question also required help with his unmanageable debts and advice around his income. TSO referred to CAB and assisted with a DRO by filling in the debt pack with him. We then focused on his income. TSO advised and assisted tenant with a claim for UC, children were added to the claim and as a result is now in full payment. We also assisted with a successful claim for child benefit which further increased his income and meant living independently with children was made much easier.
7. In another case, TSO worked with a tenant who was referred in because he had very little income meaning he was struggling with his bills. Interview and assessment was carried out by TSO which highlighted that tenant was not claiming the correct benefits and maximising income. Tenant had some physical issues waiting for an operation to remove his eye after an assault when he was living in hostels. TSO helped this vulnerable tenant to book an appointment with doctors to gather a sicknote, UC LWCE applied for, and PIP application

made. As tenant was struggling with his eyesight and was living in a 1st floor flat, I made a referral to See and Solve who were able to visit and identified he was not able to live at that property much longer. TSO discussed a Direct Let with TO and now he is now waiting for keys to a 1 bed bungalow.