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## Pen Portrait

A pen portrait is a brief description of a person: a character sketch in words. In the supported accommodation field pen portraits can be used to provide an impression of the kind of client group that a particular project caters for. This in turn can help the local authority quickly decide that the people living in the accommodation qualify for Housing Benefit under the exempt accommodation rules.

Examples of pen portraits:

- A is a 29-year-old young woman; she has been an intravenous drug user since she was 16 and has a history of depression and self harm. She is currently engaged with a treatment programme and has a regular heroine substitute prescription. Her support needs include correct use of substitute medication, rebuilding relationships with family and improving self esteem.
- B is a 40-year-old man who has struggled with alcohol dependency throughout his adult life. Became homeless after his marriage broke down. Support needs include abstinence from alcohol and establishing regular contact with his children.