

Appendix 3

Sheltered Housing Review Your questions answered

Q . What is the Sheltered Housing Review?

A. The Sheltered Housing review is a consultation process, looking at the way the Council provides services and housing related support to over 1300 tenants in 31 sheltered housing schemes. Specifically the Council is proposing changes to staff living on site, but this will happen over time when staff leave or decide to move, or there is currently a vacancy. The proposal means that the overall staff numbers will reduce with around 2 staff looking after 3 buildings. This small team is known as a cluster.

Q. Why is it taking place?

A. There are several reasons for this. Currently the payments you make don't cover the cost of the service by around £5 per week per tenant. This means that other non-sheltered tenants pay for the service as the shortfall comes from general rental income.

In addition we want to keep the total rent and service charge sheltered housing tenants pay as affordable as possible to existing tenants and those waiting for sheltered housing.

We also believe that these changes will help us recruit and retain a dedicated workforce and to maximise the use of empty accommodation that was formally occupied by staff.

Q. I pay for this service, why are you changing it?

A. As mentioned above the charges you pay don't currently meet the full cost of the service. Like many services within sheltered housing we pool the costs across all residents rather than residents paying the exact cost for your scheme. This helps keep costs affordable and protects you from increases if scheme costs unexpectedly change.

Q. Will I still get a daily weekday call and other services?

A. Yes all the services you currently receive will continue to be delivered to you including the daily call and scheme health and safety checks, such as fire alarm testing.

Q. Who will provide these services?

A. You will receive these services from Sheltered Housing Officers who may or may not live on site. We will ensure that an information sheet is on the office door so you know when staff are available and who they are. As they are part of a small cluster they will become familiar to you.

Q. The property occupied by my sheltered housing officer is vacant, what will happen to it?

A. As I'm sure you appreciate we can't leave properties empty, but we are mindful that many of these properties are nearby to sheltered housing residents. If the empty accommodation is a flat we will most likely let it to a sheltered housing applicant. If it's a house we will carefully select an applicant and put additional rules in place to ensure a certain level of conduct or we may look at other uses such as people leaving hospital who cannot return home.

Q. What happens in an emergency?

A . Staff will still be on site for parts of the day. When they are not on site or at night the Council's Homeline response service will support you in a similar way to what happens presently at weekends.

Q. I would like to give my view on this matter.

A . We are asking the Tenants Association for Sheltered Housing (TASH) for their views on this matter. However, as not all schemes are represented we are visiting each sheltered scheme to hold a drop in session for residents or family members / carers (see details on attached letter). If you are unable to attend the meeting but wish to comment you can do so by completing a short questionnaire which a member of staff will be happy to provide.