



SHELTERED HOUSING REVIEW REPORT

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report informs the partner councils of the conclusions from a strategic review of sheltered housing services delivered for them by East Kent Housing. The report makes recommendations based on an assessment of current service provision and scheme buildings in Canterbury, Dover and Shepway, Thanet DC having previously transferred its sheltered housing stock.
- 1.2 The purpose of the report is to seek the councils' agreement to consult tenants on proposals to reconfigure the existing service delivery model for sheltered housing and to make changes to on-site service provision, such as laundry facilities, and the charges associated with these. In addition the report highlights potential scheme remodelling and re-designation options to enable best use to be made of the current stock to meet future local housing needs.

2. SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To agree that tenants should be consulted on:
- i) The new sheltered housing service delivery model as described within the report
 - ii) The upgrading of existing on-site laundry provision and the introduction of appropriate payment arrangements or service charges
 - iii) A review of current arrangements for funding sheltered housing related services and proposals for the introduction of specific service charges related to the services tenants receive.
2. To agree that further work should take place to develop firm proposals for those schemes/ properties identified as appropriate for re-designation, re-modelling, or alternative future use.

3. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The review, which has been structured around a scoping document developed in conjunction with tenants and the Councils client officers, was led by an independent project manager with wide experience of the subject area. Service provision across the three councils that still own a sheltered housing stock has been considered and the methodology used has included quantitative and qualitative research based on data gathered and feedback from service users and staff. Other key stakeholders such as health and social care agencies have also been consulted. Benchmarking has also been undertaken and the recommendations are informed by sector best practice.
- 3.2 As well as considering direct service provision in some detail the review, which has been taken led by an independent project manager, has also considered:
- The implications of changing demographics on future service demands
 - The strategic context in which sheltered housing operates
 - The quality and quantity of existing provision and whether this is in line with projected demand trends
- 3.3 More specifically the review has considered:
- How well does the service meet current and future service user's needs?
 - Does the service meet Supporting People expectations?
 - Are all staff suitably equipped to deliver a quality service?
 - Does the service demonstrate good value for money?
 - Whether there is any over or under provision of sheltered housing
 - Whether scheme buildings are fit for purpose

4. DEMOGRAPHICS

4.1 Table 1 below shows the older age population profile of the three districts that have retained a sheltered housing stock.

Table1- Older persons' populations in east Kent

	Persons 55 □ 59	Persons 60 □ 64	Persons 65 □ 69	Persons 70 □ 74	Persons 75 □ 79	Persons 80 and over
Canterbury	8,387	9,656	7,950	6,391	5,198	8,906
Dover	7,290	8,224	6,725	5,196	4,149	6,447
Shepway	6,616	8,142	6,418	5,175	4,124	6,698

4.2 As can be seen in Table 2 below, the current older persons' populations in east Kent are amongst the greatest in the County.

Table 2 – Kent (KCC) area older persons' population

Age Group	55 □ 59	60 □ 64	65 □ 69	70 □ 74	75 □ 79	80 and over
District						
Ashford	6,749	7,679	6,195	4,614	3,697	5,462
Canterbury	8,387	9,656	7,950	6,391	5,198	8,906
Dartford	5,064	5,093	3,890	3,208	2,843	4,011
Dover	7,290	8,224	6,725	5,196	4,149	6,447
Gravesham	5,568	5,874	4,631	3,886	3,350	4,423
Maidstone	9,246	10,201	7,997	6,272	4,993	7,252
Sevenoaks	7,202	8,188	6,318	4,966	4,194	6,189
Shepway	6,616	8,142	6,418	5,175	4,124	6,698
Swale	7,986	9,224	7,180	5,511	4,168	5,764
Thanet	8,080	9,581	7,908	6,401	5,238	8,866
Tonbridge and Malling	6,900	7,593	6,088	4,953	4,033	5,353
Tunbridge Wells	6,401	7,029	5,487	4,157	3,545	5,886

4.3 Kent's (KCC area) population is projected to grow by 153,800 people (+10.5%) to 1,620,200 by 2021. This projected rate of growth is faster than both regional (+9.3%) and national (+8.6%) averages. Kent's older population is projected to grow by +26.7%

between 2011 and 2021. This compares to +26.5% for the South East region and +23.6% for England. Table 3 below, illustrates that the east Kent districts will be amongst those with the greatest numbers of older people in their population.

Table 3: Projected older population growth in Kent by 2021

District	2011	2021	Growth Number	% change
Ashford	20,200	26,900	6,800	+33.4%
Canterbury	28,700	35,800	7,200	+25.0%
Dartford	6,300	8,100	1,700	+27.5%
Dover	22,700	29,700	6,900	+30.5%
Gravesham	16,400	19,900	3,400	+20.9%
Maidstone	26,800	35,100	8,200	+30.7%
Sevenoaks	21,900	27,200	5,300	+24.4%
Shepway	22,700	28,500	5,800	+25.4%
Swale	22,900	30,000	7,100	+31.1%
Thanet	28,600	34,400	5,800	+20.4%
Tonbridge and Malling	20,700	26,500	5,900	+28.4%
Tunbridge Wells	19,300	24,300	5,000	+26.2%

4.4 Within these projected increases, significant growth in the number of older people with dementia is also predicted. Research by Alzheimer's International suggests a prevalence rate in the 85 years plus cohort of 23.6%. Based on the projected population increase this would equate to a 91.6% increase (826 people) in this age group with dementia by 2033.

5. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

5.1 The Government's key policy priority is to support people to remain at home, rather than in care homes or hospital settings, for as long as possible. This is reflected in the national policy 'shifting the balance of care' and associated targets to increase the percentage of people aged 65 and over with high level care needs, including those with dementia, who are cared for at home.

5.2 The aim is to prevent premature and inappropriate hospital and care home admissions by increasing emphasis on health improvement and anticipatory care, providing more continuous care and more support, closer to home.

5.3 Consequently the national agenda promotes a range of housing and support services to enable older people to choose the services which are best for them. Appropriate accommodation, well designed, flexible and responsive support services, and the use of Telecare and "Telehealth" all contribute to a person's wellbeing, helping to maintain independence and allow people to remain at home through periods of changing need.

5.4 Assistive technology/ telecare can provide a solution for people with physical and cognitive impairments as well as counteracting isolation, monitoring risk and promoting safety for people with dementia. Greater use of assistive technology should be explored further by the councils as part of their longer term plans to support older people to continue to live independently, whether in sheltered or general needs housing in the wider community.

5.5 One of the most significant developments has been the introduction of Extra Care Housing which is intended to cater for older people who are becoming more frail and less able to do everything for themselves. In addition to the communal facilities typically found in sheltered housing (residents' lounge, guest suite, laundry), Extra Care will

usually also have a restaurant or dining room, health & fitness facilities, hobby and computer rooms. The most significant difference however is the varying levels of domestic support and personal care that is available, usually provided by on-site staff.

The amount of Extra Care Housing across the country is increasing and Kent County Council's strategy includes clear commissioning plans to develop more of this type of housing in areas of need in East Kent. This is not surprising given that this flexible and responsive model of housing has been shown to result in:

- Fewer hospital admissions
- More timely hospital discharge
- Fewer people having to move to care homes
- Best value for residents and local tax payers
- Better balancing of security and risk

5.6 This review has identified a number of possible options to remodel some of the existing housing stock in to Extra Care.

6. CURRENT SERVICE PROVISION

6.1 On site housing related support services at East Kent Housing managed developments are currently provided by teams of Sheltered/ Scheme Managers between 9 am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. In addition, residents of all sheltered housing schemes are able to contact a Lifeline control centre in an emergency at any time of the day or night via a community alarm. This is supplemented in Dover and Shepway by a mobile warden style service providing an out of hours in person response, when this is required. This service is provided by existing staff on a rota basis. The Canterbury enhanced sheltered schemes have staff on-site 24 hours a day with sleep in night support workers on hand to respond in the case of an emergency when summoned by the Lifeline control centre.

6.2 In some developments the services provided only serve the needs of a relatively small number of tenants. Tenant feedback indicates that some do not want, need or value the housing support service at sheltered housing but generally still have to pay for it.

6.3 To address this issue, sheltered tenants could be given the option to reduce the level of housing related support they receive and any associated charge. Alternatively, the allocations criteria could be changed so that sheltered housing is only allocated to those with housing related support needs.

7. LOCAL SUPPLY AND DEMAND

7.1 The three councils between them currently own 1496 units of sheltered and enhanced sheltered accommodation that is managed by EKH. Based on latest census figures there appears to be sufficient sheltered housing in each district to meet projected demand. Similarly, the latest draft of Kent County Council's (KCC) strategy shows likely demand based on expected age profiles over the next 10 years. This is complicated however by the fact that this is not simply a question of case of numbers of units required, but of appropriate property types and extended choice. The review has therefore sought to assess the capacity of the existing sheltered housing stock to meet future need and demands.

7.2 This has included producing a collective profile assessment of all of the sheltered schemes in each district and one each for the four Canterbury enhanced sheltered schemes. The factors considered included:

- Physical condition, type, and age
- Remaining life of accommodation
- Financial viability
- Rental income, void rent loss, support costs

- Fit & appropriate for service
- Potential of building to meet current needs
- Style of the building,
- Ease of providing support and care
- Tenant and staff views
- Location and amenity capacity for improvement
- Demand from applicants,
- Accessibility to local amenities
- Future potential demand
- Applicants priority
- Building costs,
- Potential for meeting higher level needs
- Alternative provision

7.3 The limited timescale for this review only allowed for a brief précis of schemes and further asset management review should therefore be undertaken on an individual scheme basis. However, some schemes are clearly old and reaching the end of their viable economic life. Others comprise mainly smaller, bedsit type, accommodation that has become increasingly hard to let as it does not meet potential tenants expectations. This is reflected in a slow but steady decline in the numbers of applicants for certain sheltered housing schemes over the last few years.

7.4 Conversely, there are always sufficient numbers of applicants waiting for good quality homes and feedback from other registered social landlords who provide sheltered and extra care sheltered housing in the three districts suggests a similar picture.

7.5 Private developments offering independent living with added support for single persons or couples generally aged 55+ are also available. Currently there are existing developments with properties for re-sale and new developments that are due for completion, particularly in Shepway. This expanding market may have a negative impact on demand for the Councils' sheltered housing, as the percentage of older owner occupiers continues to increase.

7.6 The review has therefore highlighted a current over provision of sheltered housing in some areas where stock can be designated as "low demand". Low demand sheltered housing stock should not be considered to be fit for the purpose of housing medium/high priority applicants.

7.7 In the short term the councils should look to decommission their low demand sheltered housing stock. One option could be re-designate some schemes as over 45-65's housing provision with no support so as to help alleviate a lack of general needs provision for this age group and also help to meet some of the demand for smaller properties resulting from Welfare Reform. In the longer term however, the predicted changing age profile of east Kent suggests that additional provision needs to be planned for.

8. REVIEW FINDINGS

8.1 How well do the services meet current and future tenants' needs?

- Service delivery arrangements vary across the three districts and the absence of a common performance framework leads to uncertainty as to the role of sheltered workers. Elements of the old 'good neighbour' /sheltered warden role remain embedded in the service which diverts staff from their core housing related support obligations. Consequently some residents and staff feel frustrated because they

are not receiving or delivering the service expected. This also serves to encourage a dependency culture rather than promoting independence.

- It is essential to ensure that personalisation is an integral part of service delivery and enabling tenants to be more independent. However, tenant feedback suggests there is a lack of clarity around who to contact for what and this is why they rely heavily on their Support Officer for assistance with routine housing management and maintenance queries.
- Currently most sheltered scheme staff work between 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday. From reviewing activity in many schemes at different times of the day it is clear that demand for support and advice occurs principally between 8:30 – 1:30pm, with a constant through flow of tenant traffic during these times. This was a similar picture for every scheme with the afternoon generally a much quieter time for staff other than the occasional emergency.
- A clearer focus on delivering housing related support as defined by and, paid for, by Supporting People would enable officers to deliver a better quality service to those tenants who really need the support as well as enabling service efficiency savings to be made. This would be reinforced by making better links with health and social care agencies so as to promote improved well-being for older people
- Any Supporting People strategic review of sheltered housing services is likely to look at whether linking support to accommodation is the best use of resources. The main criterion for accessing sheltered housing is age rather than the need for support. This means that significant numbers of sheltered tenants do not need or want the support service available. Consequently, within some schemes only a minority of tenants need the support that Supporting People is paying for. At the same time there are older people in the wider community whose housing related support needs are not being met.

Recommended Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Refocus the service on identifying and enabling tenants housing related support needs to be met.• Develop and implement a suite of service standards with clear performance outcome expectations• Establish a working group of tenants and staff to produce a tenants handbook which complements the new service standards and provides clarity for tenants on the role of their Support Co-ordinator• Introduce a common performance framework for staff in order to roll out the new service delivery model across all three districts.

8.2 Do the services meet Supporting People expectations?

- Competing pressures for staff have impacted upon the updating of some needs/risk assessments and support plans, and some staff are not spending as much time as expected on housing related support.

- Needs assessment and support planning systems are principally paper based and significant efficiencies could be delivered if this was moved to an electronic solution.

Recommended Actions

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce new working practices to ensure the proportion of housing related support delivered meets SP expectations • Implement new common needs/ risk assessment template for all tenants by 31 March 2014. • Introduce new database recording system to hold completed assessments electronically |
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8.3 Are staff suitably equipped and organised to deliver a quality service?

- Implementation of the proposed new model of support for older tenants should be accompanied by the introduction of a comprehensive staff training and development programme including the following key areas:
 - Support planning and housing related support
 - Safeguarding vulnerable adults
 - Child protection
 - IT
 - Dementia care
- More effective service management arrangements are required to support front line staff.

Recommended Actions

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a training/needs audit/appraisal for all sheltered housing staff to determine skills levels and identify training/ development needs • Compile a mandatory training schedule for all sheltered staff as part of their annual performance framework • Implement new staffing structure as proposed below. |
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8.4 Do the services demonstrate good value for money?

- There are differences between the councils in terms of the extent to which service costs are charged to individuals or 'pooled' across all tenants. In one district there is no separate charge identified for housing related support or the community alarm service. The benefit of implementing service charges is that it requires the landlord to identify the actual cost of service provision which then enables tenants to assess whether or not the service represents good value for money.
- A common concern among residents was that the existing on-site laundry facilities were unreliable. Currently there is either a minimal or no charge for these services whereas other landlords usually recoup these costs through a service charge. Alternatively, contracting direct with a company that will provide and maintain the laundry equipment would deliver a fit for purpose service that demonstrates good value for money.
- The mobile responding service is little used and where it is this is rarely in a genuine emergency situation. Most other housing providers now rely solely on their community

alarm monitoring service to summon appropriate assistance in the event of an emergency in the evening or at weekends.

Recommended Actions

- The weekly housing related support charge and other charges associated with the provision of sheltered and enhanced care housing should be reviewed and charges for these services should be introduced where they are not already in place.
- Establish a working group including residents representatives to research and benchmark alternative models to provide on-site laundry facilities that are fit for purpose and cost effective.
- Consider whether the travelling out of hours response service is necessary and providing good value for money.

8.5 Is there is an over provision of sheltered housing?

- Whilst there are a significant number of schemes across the three districts demographic projections also suggest there will be a significant increase in the demand for older people's housing over the next 8 years.
- There is less demand for some designated older people's accommodation. This results in long term voids arising and some schemes being designated 'hard to let'. It can also result in properties being used to meet the housing needs of service users who technically do not meet the criteria for sheltered/ supported housing and this can cause an imbalance at the schemes. For example, there are some tenants with no support needs, who are working and clearly do not meet the criteria.
- Staff are frustrated at the lack of input they are able to have over the allocation of properties.
- Some residents have significant support needs, for example related to alcohol dependency, and the right intervention with specialist support services is necessary.

Recommended actions

- Review and revise the housing allocations criteria for older people's housing
- Re-brand sheltered housing to 'Independent Living – Over 55's'
- Review the use of sheltered housing with a view to possibly re-designating some schemes as 'older people's housing – no support'
- Establish joint assessment and allocation protocols with sheltered housing and housing options staff

8.6 Are the scheme buildings fit for purpose?

- In general the sheltered scheme buildings in the three districts are in a reasonable state of repair with improvement programmes in place to update those which are looking tired and aged. A small number of schemes have been identified as hard to let. This is mainly

due to the size of individual units which no longer meet the expectations or needs of potential tenants who have a choice of alternative accommodation elsewhere.

- Where schemes have been highlighted as being due for improvement, repair or refurbishment, some residents reported at review meetings, their frustrations that they did not know when this work was due to be carried out and what it would entail.

Further Actions / Implementation

- The limited timescale for this review has only allowed for a brief précis of schemes.
- Further asset management review should be undertaken on an individual scheme basis with a view to identifying those that are coming to the end of their viable economic life and which should therefore be de-commissioned and re-modelled or replaced to meet the predicted future needs
- Tenants should be provided with information about works planned to be carried out at their schemes with clear timelines

9. PROPOSED SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL

- 9.1 Although no change is proposed in the numbers of front line staff their focus will. Consequently it is proposed to re-designate these posts as 'Support Co-ordinator's'. This will reinforce the services focus on promoting independence and move away from the out-dated concept and expectations of a sheltered housing warden service.
- 9.2 Staff will be available at the times of day when residents most want access to them. To provide consistency and continuity the Support Co-ordinators will retain designated schemes where they will be on site for pre-arranged appointments and regular twice weekly advice and information sessions. Residents will also have access to a duty officer for advice and support via a dedicated phone line on weekdays between 9.00am and 5.00pm.
- 9.3 The Co-ordinators primary function will be to apply a robust new approach to assessing and enabling the support needs of individual tenants, as set out in an agreed Independent Living Plan, to be met. All teams will use the same assessment tools and common processes and procedures in line with Supporting People expectations. It is intended that all assessments will be held electronically on a new specialist database.
- 9.4 Support for front line staff would also be strengthened. Rather than principally lone working as at present, the service would operate from a central 'hub' in each district. As well as encouraging a one team philosophy this would enable staff resources to be deployed more effectively, to cover sickness or holiday absence for example. Such an arrangement is also more cost effective, for example, in terms of IT infrastructure, although each scheme will retain a hot desk/ docking station facility. The central hub will also provide an information resource for residents with dedicated telephone access to a duty officer for advice and support if needed, between 9 am and 5 pm.
- 9.5 Two team leader posts will be created to fulfil the line management role of district co-ordinators. These post holders will also be responsible for certain aspects of what is currently done by the SHO's such as dealing with emergency calls. In addition it is proposed to create a new role of Health and Wellbeing Co-ordinator. This post holder will help to implement the new vision for older peoples housing by facilitating activities, health and well-being, and ensuring that services integrate more effectively with Health and Social Care.

10. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

10.1 The proposals contained within this report will bring with them the following positive service enhancements:

10.2 A more tenant focussed service

- Introducing a more robust approach to agreeing with residents an Independent Living Plan, allowing the support needs of individual tenants are assessed and services geared to meeting these needs
- Allowing those tenants who do not need or use the support services to exercise greater choice and have reduced charges.
- Ensuring that staff are clearer about their roles in providing support for residents and have training to carry out these roles more effectively- there will be greater clarity in what tenants can expect and greater consistency between different schemes
- Providing for staff to be available at the times of day when tenants most want access to them – including pre-arranged appointment times and advice and information sessions at each schemes plus a dedicated phone line within 9-5pm giving access to a duty officer for advice and support when the scheme manager is not available
- Providing a more professional services guided by clear principles of what constitutes housing related support - clear performance targets and service standards to enable them to adopt a professional approach to their work and deliver positive outcomes for tenants

10.3 A service that is re-focussed on promoting independent living and improved well-being for older people

- Better more focussed support for residents that promotes independence rather than creating dependence
- Greater clarity for residents on what service and support they can expect from their scheme manager
- Each resident will have an Independent living plan with clear outcomes relating to outcomes required by supported people
- Making better links with health and other agencies through a specialist Health and Wellbeing Coordinator – promoting activities that will develop physical and intellectual wellbeing

10.4 Improved value for money and greater efficiency in the service

- Providing greater clarity about what housing related support is paid for by Supporting People and defining more clearly the boundaries with services that constitutes personal care
- Aligns staff resources to periods when there is the greatest demand from residents
- Provides for a fairer way of charging residents for the services they receive – while allowing residents to have greater choice over the services they receive
- Provides a consistent approach across all areas delivering services to older people as staff will be working to the same model, aims and objectives

10.5 Improving the appeal of sheltered housing

- Re-branding the service as Independent Living for Older people
- Breaking any associations and perceptions linked to residential or nursing care
- Setting clearer standards and parameters around the services that residents can expect

10.6 Providing accommodation that is fit for purpose

- Begins the process of assessing the suitability (and ability to let) of existing accommodation

- Developing a more robust assessment processes before tenants are accepted for supported housing ensuring that the accommodation and support services are suitable for the needs of the prospective tenant
- Helps the process of planning for older peoples accommodation needs in the future, including extending support services to older people not living in dedicated sheltered housing schemes

11. AUTHORS DETAILS

Louise Gotch was commissioned by East Kent Housing to undertake this review. Louise has extensive project management experience and has worked at a senior level in housing, social care and the voluntary sector. She has a Social Science degree /Social work degree and Masters degree in Management as well as a Diploma in Strategic commissioning, She worked for seven years as a commissioning manager for Hertfordshire County Council and also as Area Locality Manager for Social Services and has recently completed reviews of sheltered and older people's services for Golding Homes/ Westminster City Council and Town and Country Housing and achieved successful efficiency gains while also implementing new working models which have ensured a better streamlined and consistent approach to service delivery, resulting in positive outcomes for tenants. She has also been involved in developing extra care.