

Sheltered Housing proposed service re-design consultation

Southampton City Council is consulting on proposed changes to support services as part of the Sheltered Housing service.

We would like to hear your thoughts on the proposals and any impacts or alternative suggestions you would like us to consider. Now is your opportunity to have your say.

Please complete the following questionnaire to read more about the proposals and to give us your views.

The consultation questionnaire is also available to complete online at www.southampton.gov.uk/consultations.

You can also email your feedback or any questions you have to us at yourcity.yoursay@southampton.gov.uk.

This consultation closes on **Monday 21 April 2025**.

Background

There are a few reasons why now is a good time to undertake this review of the Sheltered Housing service:

- The service has not had an overall review for many years. We believe we can improve the way we deliver support in a way that is more focused on what a person really needs, offering more choice and getting better outcomes for our customers.
- The service that residents have been receiving until now has largely been based on the type of accommodation they live in, rather than the resident's specific needs. Historically, the charges for support services have been inconsistent across the different types of sheltered housing and do not reflect the true cost of delivering the service.
- We are seeking to provide residents with clearer information about what they can expect to receive from the service.
- Funding for the support service is due to come to an end. To protect this important service, we need to review how it will be funded in the future, ensuring that service charges are fair as well as covering the overall cost of the service.
- The national telephony infrastructure is moving across from analogue to digital in the coming months, and because of this we have to upgrade our telecare alarm systems in our sheltered housing stock. This gives us an opportunity to review how we deliver telecare services to our customers in the most cost-effective way.

Southampton City Council has over 3,300 properties designated as older person accommodation (or 'sheltered housing'). The age criteria for this type of accommodation ranges from 50+/55+/60+.

The changes being proposed in this consultation would affect all residents that live in Southampton City Council-owned sheltered housing, as well as our residents of the future, i.e. those currently on the Housing Register. This includes people living in one of our housing-with-care (Extra Care) complexes as well as those living in the more traditional type of sheltered housing. The proposals would impact residents in different ways depending on the type of sheltered housing they live in.

We know from talking to our customers that they wish to preserve the minimum age criteria for this type of accommodation, and for this reason we are not proposing to change the age criteria associated with sheltered housing.

The proposed service redesign relates only to the support services that are delivered within this type of accommodation. There would be no impact on other aspects of the overall housing management service. In this context, support is defined as being services that assist a person to maintain a tenancy and retain their independence. It includes advice such as safety in the home, assistance with managing personal finances and supporting a person to be able to enjoy a full social life in the community.

The full details of the proposals, and how they relate to the different types of sheltered housing accommodation, can be found on the following pages, alongside questions that let you give us your feedback and ask us any questions you have.

Sheltered housing complexes and Extra Care 1,544 properties across 25 blocks

These are the larger buildings that include communal facilities such as community rooms. Residents living in this type of accommodation benefit from the reassurance that the support service offers: the nature of this type of accommodation means that we must have an alarm system that works well with other systems such as door entry and fire alarms.

We know residents living in this type of accommodation tend to have greater need for support and telecare services. We also know that it is important that we continue to have telecare systems in these blocks, that link with door entry systems and existing fire alarm systems, as well as provide us with the flexibility for support staff to manage telecare calls at the site.

Our proposals mean that residents of this type of accommodation will see the least change in the way that support is delivered going forward, and the support service will continue to be an integral part of living in this type of accommodation. With the help of our customers, we will develop a set of service standards, focussing on delivering the best outcomes for residents, making it clear what residents can expect from us.

In summary, we are proposing that:

- The telecare system within each property would be upgraded to a digital system over the course of the next two years. This would ensure that residents receive the most up-to-date alarm system that is fit for the future, offering the latest technology and functionality.
- Every resident would have an active telecare alarm system that is monitored 24 hours a day.
- Residents would continue to have access to a 24-hour emergency response service, offering support and assistance in emergency situations.
- Each resident would be offered an annual review of their support needs, with those in need of support offered a tailored plan delivered by the Supported Housing team - this might include a regular home visit or support to access other services.
- A single support service charge would be applied to every tenancy. This is for the telecare alarm monitoring service, emergency response service and any pro-active support services provided by staff, including social activities.

- The charge would be the same for every tenant living in this type of accommodation and would contribute towards the overall cost of providing the support service. The new support charge is planned to start in 2025/26, with any existing support charges that residents are currently paying coming to an end at the same time.

- The charges for the support service would be introduced in a phased approach so as to minimise the impact on residents:

	From 2025/26	From April 2026	From April 2027
Weekly support charge	£6.00	£9.00	£12.50

- The charge would form part of the tenancy agreement and would be payable by every tenant living in this type of accommodation. As the charge relates to services that are not property-related, it would not be eligible for housing benefit, universal credit (UC) or for the purposes of any other welfare benefits.

- £12.50 per week represents the average per property cost of delivering the support service in this type of accommodation, and is broken down as follows:

- > 24-hour telecare alarm monitoring service
- > 24-hour emergency response service
- > On-site housing support team presence
- > Both planned and re-active support visits (including welfare checks)
- > Support planning (including regular reviews)

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposals overall?

- Strongly agree
 Slightly agree
 Neither
 Slightly disagree
 Strongly disagree

What do you think about the proposed charges specifically?

- Far too low
 Slightly too low
 The right amount
 Slightly too high
 Far too high
 Not sure

What impact do you feel the proposals overall could have on you or the wider community?

- Very positive
 Fairly positive
 No impact at all
 Fairly negative
 Very negative
 Don't know

What impact do you feel the proposed charges specifically could have on you or the wider community?

- Very positive
 Fairly positive
 No impact at all
 Fairly negative
 Very negative
 Don't know

If you disagree with the proposals, or have any comments, impacts, suggestions or alternatives you feel we should consider, please provide details:

Small/stand-alone blocks ***1,771 properties across 90 blocks***

These are the small two-storey blocks of sheltered housing accommodation. People often choose to move to this type of accommodation as it is specifically aimed at older people who are planning for the future, where they might benefit from some of the support services available, but who don't need them just yet.

Because of this, lots of residents living in this type of accommodation live independent lives and have low or no support needs, gaining minimal benefit from the support services currently available to them. The proposal for this type of accommodation then is to give customers the choice and control over what support services they receive and when they receive them.

In summary, we are proposing:

- Removing the existing telecare alarm system from all properties of this type and, rather than replacing the alarm system in all properties, offering each resident the option to decide if they wish to have a telecare alarm system or not. Those who opt to have an alarm would then be offered a digital alarm unit that support staff would install in their home.
- The alarm would have a built-in SIM card, so there is no need for the resident to have an existing telephone line. The alarm offers all the features and more of the existing alarm unit, and the resident would then have access to a 24-hour emergency alarm service with the added benefit of the emergency response service.
- This would be a chargeable service, but only those residents who opt-in will be charged.
- Residents would also have the option to have a regular support visit from a member of the Sheltered Housing team. There would be another weekly charge for those who choose to have this additional service.
- We believe that these changes would give residents choice and control over what support services they receive from the Sheltered Housing team, only paying for the services they need, when they need them.
- The removal of the existing alarm system is planned to be carried out in 2025/26, and any service charges that are currently being charged to tenants would be ended then as well. Residents would be given the option of a digital alarm at this point.
- For those who opt-in to the various support services, the charges would be as follows:

	From 2025/26	From April 2026	From April 2027
Weekly telecare and emergency support	£3.00	£5.00	£8.20
Support package including weekly support visits/welfare checks	£2.00	£4.00	£6.00

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposals overall?

- Strongly agree Slightly agree Neither Slightly disagree Strongly disagree

What do you think about the proposed charges specifically?

- Far too low Slightly too low The right amount Slightly too high Far too high Not sure

What impact do you feel the proposals overall could have on you or the wider community?

- Very positive Fairly positive No impact at all Fairly negative Very negative Don't know

What impact do you feel the proposed charges specifically could have on you or the wider community?

- Very positive Fairly positive No impact at all Fairly negative Very negative Don't know

If you disagree with the proposals, or have any comments, impacts, suggestions or alternatives you feel we should consider, please provide details:

About you

Are you a resident or tenant of...

- | | Yes | No |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| ...a sheltered housing complex? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ...a floating support block? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Which of the following describe your interest in this consultation? Please tick all that apply.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I'm family/friend to someone living in a sheltered housing complex or floating support block | <input type="checkbox"/> As a public sector organisation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I'm a resident of Southampton | <input type="checkbox"/> As a third sector organisation (e.g. a voluntary or community group or charity, etc) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I'm a resident elsewhere | <input type="checkbox"/> I'm an employee of Southampton City Council |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I live, work and/or study in Southampton | <input type="checkbox"/> I'm a political member |
| <input type="checkbox"/> As a private business | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

If other, please specify:

Do you currently have a support plan that includes having access to and/or using a telecare/warden support system?

Yes

No

What is your age?

Under 18

35 - 44

65 - 74

18 - 24

45 - 54

75+

25 - 34

55 - 64

Prefer not to say

What is your sex?

Female

Male

Prefer not to say

Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

If no, please write in your gender identity:

What is your postcode? *This is used for geographical analysis only and will not be used to identify or contact you.*

How would you describe your ethnic group?

Asian or Asian British

Mixed or multiple ethnic groups

White other

Black, Black British, Caribbean or African

White British

Other ethnic group

Prefer not to say

Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or impairments, lasting 12 months or more, that have a substantial effect on your ability to carry out day-to-day activities?

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

The following three questions are intended for people responding on behalf of a business or organisation only.

Can the name of your business or organisation be attributed to your response?

Yes

No

Can we contact you about your response to this consultation?

Yes

No

If yes, please let us know the following details:

Business/organisation name:

Contact name:

Contact email:

What happens next?

This consultation closes on **Monday 21 April 2025**. After this date, all feedback will be analysed and considered before a final decision is made.

Please return completed surveys to:

*Consultations,
First Floor, West Wing,
Civic Centre,
Southampton,
SO14 7LY.*

Alternatively, you can hand completed surveys back to any Southampton City Council-run library.

The information collected about you during this survey will only be used for the purposes of research. We may use it to contact you about this. We will only share your information with other organisations or council departments if we need to. We may also share it to prevent, investigate or prosecute criminal offences, or as the law otherwise allows. Please be aware that any comments given on this form may be published in the report. However, the council will endeavour to remove any references that could identify individuals or organisations. Our Privacy Policy (<http://www.southampton.gov.uk/privacy>) explains how we handle your personal data, and we can provide a copy if you are unable to access the Internet.