

## Sheltered Housing Support Service Redesign

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – RESIDENTS OF 2 STOREY AGE RELATED SHELTERED ACCOMMODATION

#### **1. What is the primary goal of the redesign? How will it benefit residents?**

The service has not been comprehensively reviewed for several years. The overall objective is to ensure that we deliver modern support services that enable people to live independently in their own home for longer. We are reviewing how we do this in a way that delivers both value for money and quality outcomes for residents.

#### **2. Has a decision been made already on what the redesign will look like?**

No, we have developed a set of proposals, however a decision will not be made until the end of the consultation period. The feedback received from the consultation will inform the decision that is made.

#### **3. What is meant by the term ‘housing support’?**

These are services that are over and above the housing management services offered more widely in general needs accommodation. Examples of it include the following: -

- 24- hour emergency alarm monitoring and response
- Welfare checks, developing and reviewing support plans and support visits
- Supporting residents to access the community
- Advice and support in relation to health, safety, personal finances and issues relating to maintaining a home
- Support to access other services
- Support to maintain a tenancy

#### **4. What specific changes will be made?**

Regardless of this review, we must upgrade our telecare alarm systems over the next 2 years because of forthcoming digitalisation of the national telephony infrastructure. The current telecare system will become redundant and therefore must be replaced.

We will be removing the emergency alarm system from all properties within our smaller sheltered housing blocks and offering residents an alternative alarm solution in the future.

Residents will have the option of having a new device that uses the latest digital technology. Rather than being wired into the fabric of the building it is simply plugged into a power point in the home and has an in-built SIM card that allows calls to be connected to our telecare service centre in the same way as the current system

does. Each device comes with a pendant that can be worn around the neck or wrist. Pull cords can be installed throughout the property for those who need them.

The significant advantage of this is that it offers a flexible solution. Residents can choose whether they wish to have an alarm or not, and alarms can be provided as and when the resident's needs change.

**5. Will you be removing or making changes to the minimum age criteria for my block?**

No, we have no plans under this review to make changes to the age criteria.

**6. Will I still be able to receive support from my housing support worker?**

Yes, however we know that many people living in our smaller blocks have no need for the support services that we currently provide. In fact, residents tell us that they find it frustrating when we attempt to regularly assess their needs and offer support when they clearly have no need for it.

However some residents benefit from and value the support services that we offer, and it is important that we can continue to offer these services as they help people to remain independent in their own home.

We are therefore offering a more flexible support service to our residents. People can choose to have a telecare alarm and receive the support services that go with it, but this is not mandatory. We believe that this will give residents choice and control and enable the housing support team to focus resources where they are most needed.

Residents will be able to opt into the service as and when they need it.

**7. Will there be any changes to rent or service charges because of the redesign?**

The redesign will not result in any changes to your weekly rent, however if you are currently being charged a service charge for the telecare monitoring service this will stop as and when your current alarm system is removed.

If you choose to receive one of the new digital devices there will be a weekly charge, dependant on the level of support that you require, but this will not form part of your tenancy agreement, and you will be invoiced separately for this.

**8. Will residents have an opportunity to provide input or feedback on the redesign plans? How can we contribute our ideas?**

Residents and other interested parties can feedback their views on the proposals during the 12- week consultation period. This can be done in a number of ways:

- Complete the on-line survey on the City Council's website: [www.southampton.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.southampton.gov.uk/consultations)
- Complete a physical version of the survey, which can be printed on request at any Southampton library and posted back to us

- Attend one of the planned consultation events that will be advertised. Staff will be available to support residents to give feedback at the events
- Speak to a member of the housing support team and request assistance in providing your views
- Email the Council at [yourcity.yoursay@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:yourcity.yoursay@southampton.gov.uk)

**9. What is the expected timeline for the redesign? When can residents expect to see the changes implemented?**

The 12-week consultation ends on 21 April 2025 and the results of the consultation will be fed into Cabinet Report for approval at the end of May 2025.

Once a decision has been made implementation will follow shortly after. Some changes will take longer than others to implement and so it is likely to be several months before the changes are fully implemented. You will be given 28 days notice of any new service charge.

**10. How will residents be kept informed about the progress of the redesign? Will there be regular updates or meetings?**

We will provide regular updates to the Sheltered Housing Forum as well as regular communication via noticeboards, Tenants Links, and social media. Your Housing Support Worker will also be able to update you.

**11. How will I know what level of service I can expect?**

In consultation with residents, we will develop a set of service standards which will outline the type and level of service you can expect. These standards will be reviewed, monitored and scrutinised by residents to ensure we continue to deliver a service that meets residents' expectations and needs.

**12. I have further questions, who can I ask?**

Any member of the housing support staff team can either answer your question or contact someone who can. Please do not hesitate to ask.