

## Sheltered Housing Support Service Redesign

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – RESIDENTS OF LARGE COMPLEXES AND EXTRA CARE SCHEMES

#### **1. What is the primary reason for 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. Will housing support staff continue to be based on complexes?**

The intention is that staff will continue to be available at complexes, but it is likely that the amount of time spent on site will vary dependant on the needs of each individual scheme and residents living in it. We are working up more detailed proposals and will work with staff and residents to ensure that staff remain accessible to residents when needed.

#### **5. Will there be any changes to the services delivered by the commissioned care provider in extra care blocks?**

No, there will continue to be a continuous presence of the care provider in our extra care complexes. There will be no changes to packages of care as a result of this review.

## **6. Will there be any changes to the day-to-day management of the buildings?**

No, housing support staff will continue to deliver housing management services such as ensuring the building is safe, reporting repairs to communal areas and maintaining the cleanliness of shared spaces.

Safety, security and accessibility will remain unchanged in the block.

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

Your rent will not be affected however we are consulting on a new 'support' service charge that will form part of your tenancy agreement. This will be payable by all tenants living in supported housing complexes and will be in addition to the weekly rent.

## **8. I have not been required to pay a 'support' charge previously. Why now?**

There are some inconsistencies in the way we currently charge tenants for support. Many residents already pay a weekly 'support' service charge. We are using this review as an opportunity to simplify this, making it clearer, consistent and fair to all.

Because support services are not considered to be a housing management function, we are not able to recover these costs from the housing revenue account (rental income). Up until now the service has been partially paid for through social care funding, however this is now under review and is unlikely to be available to the same extent in the future. This means that to continue to deliver support we must find alternative ways of funding the service.

## **9. Will I be able to 'opt out' of the support service and if so will I still have to pay the 'support' service charge?**

Support is an integral part of the type of accommodation you live in. Whilst you can decline the offer of regular support visits, you still have access to an emergency alarm and the support services as detailed above are available to you as and when you need them. Because of this you are not able to opt out of paying the service charge.

## **10. 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 at [www.southampton.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.southampton.gov.uk/consultations)
- Complete a physical version of the survey that 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)

**11. 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.

**12. 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.

**13. Will there be any changes to the social activities?**

One of the benefits of living in a sheltered housing complex is the availability of community facilities. We anticipate that the activities will not be impacted, but we will be reviewing the level of staff support we are able to give in relation to supporting groups etc... We will continue to encourage residents to be involved in social activities within our complexes.

**14. 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.

**15. 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.