Open Day at Honeycroft

A special open day extravaganza was held at Honeycroft in Lawford last September with the dual purpose of raising money for charity and promoting our sheltered housing service.

The event was opened by Mrs Greta Chaplin, who has been living at Honeycroft for 25 years – longer than any other resident – and more than £800 was raised on behalf of the nationwide Macmillan Coffee morning through a variety of stalls and activities.

The event was also attended by residents from all of our other sheltered housing schemes, as well as members of our Tenants Panel, all of whom provided us with feedback about the facilities provided and were able to chat to visitors about living in sheltered housing.

You can read more about some of the feedback we got on the next page.

A warm welcome for visitors

Some of the treats on offer

Coming soon

We are currently in the process of producing a handbook for the residents of our sheltered housing schemes.

The purpose of this handbook will be to provide useful information for those who have been offered or have recently moved into sheltered housing, as well as information that we hope will be of use throughout the time you live in sheltered housing.

www.tendringdc.gov.uk
Feedback from Honeycroft Open Day

‘Having a shower room or wet room would make all the difference’

‘Bungalows are lovely’

‘Why not knock three into two to create wet room and separate bedroom’

‘Grounds are beautiful’

‘Nice warm and friendly environment’

‘Having a separate bedroom and bigger kitchen would be nice but not worried about shared facilities’

‘Why don’t you knock two side by side into one and offer to couples’

‘No nearby shops but transport laid on would solve problem for nearby supermarket’

As well as the general comments we received, all of those attending this event were asked what their priorities were for sheltered housing and the top three responses were as follows:

1 - Privacy
2 - Safety
3 - Help at hand

We are using the feedback we got from this open day to help us plan our provision of sheltered housing in the future.
Introducing our staff

On this page, you will find photographs of our Sheltered Support Officers and Tenancy Management Officers – all of whom have a role in sheltered housing. You can find out more about their respective roles and duties on the next two pages.

Sheltered Support Team

Christine F
Christine G
Colette
Dawn
Jane
Katie
Kim

Tenancy Management Team

Tony
Heidi
Philip
Living in sheltered housing – who does what?

Living in sheltered housing, it can sometimes be confusing to know which of our staff deal with certain things so we have outlined the main roles and responsibilities below:

Our Older Persons Team comes under the Council’s Life Opportunities Operations Department and forms part of the Housing Tenancy Management Team. It is made up of a team leader, seven Sheltered Support Officers and two apprentices.

**Our Sheltered Support Officers will:**
- sign you up to your new tenancy;
- work as part of a team providing flexible housing related support to everyone who needs it;
- carry out a needs and risk assessment to identify what help and support you need;
- develop a support plan with you to agree how they can best support you;
- work in partnership with other agencies, carers and support networks to help you access services you need to live independently;
- signpost and support residents through challenges and crises;
- help you to achieve positive outcomes;
- monitor communal areas and buildings on sheltered schemes;
- carry out health and safety inspections, and monitor the condition of your property;
- carry out assessments and viewings when a property is offered to you;
- monitor the cleaning and hiring of communal facilities;
- work with the Council’s repair and maintenance staff and contractors to ensure schemes are maintained and upgraded appropriately.

**Tenancy Management Officers**

The Tenancy Management team consists of a Senior Tenancy Management Officer, two Tenancy Management Officers, one Trainee Tenancy Management Officer as well as an apprentice. They work across all of our properties and will:

- Help you to manage your tenancy by providing advice on tenancy management issues, such as the upkeep and condition of your home;
- work with your sheltered support officer to mediate in any disputes and/or disagreements;
- investigate incidents of nuisance and antisocial behaviour.
Neither our Sheltered Support Officers or Tenancy Management Officers are able to:

- carry out duties which are the responsibility of other organisations, such as social services;
- act as a carer, nurse or night sitter;
- administer drugs or medication of any kind;
- do your washing, shopping, cleaning or cooking;
- look after your valuables;
- accept gifts for personal gain;
- look after pets;
- dispose of domestic waste.

However, our staff will always offer advice and direct you to any services that may be able to help you.

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**Careline**

Careline is run by Tendring District Council and it offers an effective personal alarm and instant response service that you can count on 24 hours a day, 365 days a year - all at the touch of a button. Careline provides sheltered residents with support and assistance out of hours and at weekends when the Sheltered Support Officers are not on site.

- Report any repairs for you at the weekend or outside of normal working hours
- Visit the schemes both Saturday and Sunday to check on your welfare
- Send a Mobile Support Officer to you if a situation warrants it
- Contact a key holder/relative in an emergency on your behalf
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure a safe environment for you to live in
- Collect prescribed medication for you (in an emergency)
- Give you entry if you are locked-out
- Give first aid if possible in an emergency
- Act appropriately and follow Careline guidelines in an emergency

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Careline  
Telephone: 01255 222022  
E-mail: careline@tendringdc.gov.uk
Last year, Essex County Council’s Housing Related Support (HRS) Team, reviewed the sheltered housing service that we provide as part of its review of Older People Services. This was due to the fact that the support you receive from us, in the form of a support plan and the support and advice provided by your Sheltered Support Officer, is paid for by Essex County Council and they needed to make sure we were providing a good service.

Their review involved:
- looking at how we keep our records;
- looking at how we provide support and record this;
- looking at what our policies are and checking that we follow these;
- talking to members of staff and their managers; and
- talking to residents from a number of our sheltered housing schemes.

We received their report at the end of last year and have set out below a summary of the actions they said we needed to carry out as well their recommendations. Alongside each of these, you will find details of how we have or are planning to respond to their comments.

**Action Plan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>They said…</th>
<th>We did…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We should review all support plans to make sure that all information is accurately recorded and updated</td>
<td>We have completely reviewed the method and format of our support plans and are now reviewing all existing plans. You will receive details of your next support plan meeting within the next six months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Sheltered Support Officers should record and evidence the monitoring of support plan files for consistency and appropriateness</td>
<td>Our revised support plan directly addresses the issues of consistency and appropriateness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We should have an Emergency Plan specific to each scheme and this should be held on site</td>
<td>An emergency plan is now held at each of our schemes and these provide important information for use in the event of an emergency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We should carry out DBS checks where appropriate for staff</td>
<td>All staff are checked in relation to their suitability to work with children, older persons and vulnerable persons, where this is appropriate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## They said... | We did...
---|---
We should review the Lone Working Risk Assessments for our staff to make sure that they include specific risks | Our staff risk assessments have now been reviewed and revised.
We should display our complaints policy and make sure that you have access to copies of our complaints procedure and form | We have introduced a comprehensive complaints policy and procedure that has been approved by the Sheltered Residents Panel.
We should have a complaints log that details the complaint, actions taken and outcomes and make sure that this is reviewed annually | This is covered in our new complaints policy.

## Recommendations
These recommendations were made in response to feedback from those of you who attended the meeting with Essex County Council and are based upon good practice.

## They said... | We did...
---|---
We should make sure that out of hours contact information is made clear and visible for all residents | We have made sure all residents are aware that Careline can be contacted at any time out of hours by telephone or by use of your pull-cords.
We should look at the way we let you know when your Sheltered Support Officer will be at your scheme | We have introduced white boards at every scheme that detail when you can expect a Sheltered Support Officer to be on site.
We should introduce a charter so that everyone is aware what tasks can or cannot be carried out by our staff | Our first edition of Sheltered News provided details of the Careline Service. On pages 4 and 5 of this edition, we have explained the duties and functions of the Housing Management Team.
We should consult with you in a variety of ways to make sure that your views are taken into account and acted upon wherever possible | We have invited you to provide us with your views on how better we can consult with you.
We should hold appraisal meetings with our staff once every four to six weeks | Sheltered Support Officers now have a one to one appraisal meeting every six weeks.
Getting involved

Since the end of 2012, we have run a Sheltered Housing Panel to act as a forum for representatives from each of the Council’s sheltered housing schemes to discuss issues specifically relating to this type of accommodation and work with us to improve the overall service provided.

Since this time, the Panel has met every two months and is usually attended by two representatives from each scheme who then have responsibility for feeding back information to other residents via the regular meetings held.

To date, members of the Panel have had an involvement in formulating and agreeing our mobility scooter policy, our complaints policy and our guest room policy.

In addition to this group, we also have a number of other opportunities for all our tenants to become involved in our services and these are publicised each year in the dedicated tenant involvement newsletter that we send to all tenants as well as on our website.

All of these methods vary in the amount of commitment required from you – ranging from simply being kept informed about housing issues or completing a short survey to taking a more active role by joining our district wide Tenants Panel and getting involved in policy decisions.

However, we are also always keen to hear about new ideas for involvement and if you have got a really good idea for getting involved that we don’t already do, you can contact us on 01255 686490 or submit this via our Customer Suggestion Scheme.

Use of Guest Rooms

Each of our sheltered housing schemes have either one or two guest rooms that can be used by resident’s family and friends. These rooms are either single or twin and there is a strict limit on occupancy of one or two persons, as applicable.

The charge per night should be displayed on the notice board in your scheme and these are subject to annual review.

If the guest room in your scheme is fully occupied, then we can offer you accommodation at one of our other sheltered housing schemes or, if this is not appropriate, provide you with advice about bed and breakfast or hotel accommodation in the area.

Priority for bookings will normally be given to family and friends of residents who are unwell but, at all other times, bookings will be made on a ‘first come, first served’ basis.

Our Sheltered Support Officers are responsible for the management of our guest rooms and this includes overseeing the cleaning and any necessary repairs as well as making the bookings.

If you want to book the guest room, please contact your Sheltered Support Officer during their normal working hours. However, in an emergency, you can make bookings with Careline outside of these hours but this should only be done in exceptional circumstances.

Please note that you will be responsible for the behaviour of your guests whilst they are in scheme and must make sure that they keep to the terms and conditions of your tenancy agreement and any rules that are specific to where you live.

A residents meeting in progress
Scheme Improvements – Investing in the Future

We are continuing to invest in our sheltered housing schemes through our ongoing programme of planned maintenance and improvement works.

Recent or proposed items to be included in this programme include:

- Refurbishment of the communal kitchens at St Mary’s Court in Clacton and Belmans Court in Dovercourt
- Construction of a front entrance porch at Groom House in Clacton
- Replacement of cross corridor fire doors at St Mary’s Court in Clacton
- Refurbishment of individual kitchens at Vyntoner House in St Osyth and Crooked Elms in Dovercourt

Important Information: Safety Checks

Every year the Council carried out essential safety checks within your flat. If you are not at home when these safety checks are arranged we will access your flat, carry out the necessary works and leave a card to notify you that we have been in. These safety checks include:

- Alarm pull cords testing: carried out monthly
- Smoke alarm testing: carried out annually
- Portable electrical appliance testing: carried out annually

Reporting a repair

If you need to report a repair to your property, you should do this by contacting us on 01255 686477. Alternatively, if the repair is not urgent, email HousingRepairs@tendringdc.gov.uk or report this via our website.

Our online reporting system uses the same diagrams and explanations as in the Repairs Handbook that was sent out to all tenants last year and you simply click on the relevant item to order a repair. You can find this on the Council’s website www.tendringdc.gov.uk by selecting Housing from the Residents menu at the bottom of the page and then choosing Council Housing.

If it’s necessary, we will then arrange for our Sheltered Housing Surveyor, Jennie Beales (pictured left) to call and visit you.
Making a complaint about…

Anti Social Behaviour

We believe that everyone has the right to live the way they want to provided that this does not interfere with or disturb others.

The term anti-social behaviour is used to describe a whole range of behaviour that upsets other people. This can include criminal activity and serious nuisance as well as less severe but frequent and annoying behaviour. Examples of anti social behaviour include:

- Noise nuisance;
- Vandalism and graffiti;
- Intimidation and harassment;
- Littering and flytipping; and
- Untidy gardens and communal areas.

What should you do if you are experiencing anti social behaviour?

If you are experiencing anti social behaviour, you should contact either your Sheltered Support Officer or our Tenancy Management Section for advice.

You can do this by:

- telephoning 01255 686488
- emailing us at HousingASB@tendringdc.gov.uk
- completing and returning one of our reporting forms that are on our website at www.tendringdc.gov.uk
- writing to: Housing Management, Life Opportunities, FREEPOST (CL3764), CLACTON ON SEA, Essex CO15 1YT

What happens when we receive a complaint?

All complaints that we receive are assigned to one of two categories – those that are identified as needing detailed case management, for example, complaints of ongoing nuisance and anti social behaviour, and those that can be dealt with by a single action, for example, clearing dumped rubbish.

If you report a complaint that is identified as needing detailed case management, we will send you an acknowledgement letter that tells you how your complaint will be investigated and how you will be kept informed. We will also send you a Witness Diary Form to record any subsequent incidents of nuisance or other anti social behaviour. It is very important that you complete this form as it is unlikely that we will be able to take effective enforcement action without evidence from witnesses.

If you report a complaint of a more general nature that does not require this level of case management we will still send you an acknowledgement letter that will tell you our timescale for responding.
If you feel the Council has done something wrong or badly, or failed to do something, the first thing you should do is contact your Sheltered Support Officer. You should ask them to put things right for you or explain the reasons for the Council's failure to do what you expected.

If you are not happy with the response you receive from the Sheltered Support Officer, please contact the Older Persons Team Leader by writing to Life Opportunities (Housing), Tendring District Council, Town Hall, Station Road, Clacton on Sea, CO15 1SE or by phoning 01255 686486. Alternatively, email us at housing.services@tendringdc.gov.uk

What can I complain about?

A complaint must be about something specific, for example:

- the standard of service provided by the Council
- failure by the Council to provide an agreed service
- failure by the Council to respond to a request for a service
- that the attitude or conduct of an officer has been unacceptable
- the Council has not followed an agreed procedure.

What can I not complain about?

A complaint would not include:

- requests for a service
- requests for information or an explanation of Council policy or practice
- matters for which there is an existing right of appeal (either within the Council itself or to an independent tribunal) or legal remedy
- complaints made more than 6 months after the events complained about.

All complaints that we receive are recorded on the Sheltered Scheme complaints system and your housing file.

To help us deal with your complaint effectively, please make sure that you tell us:

- What the problem is and how it happened
- How it has affected you
- What you consider we should do now to put the matter right

We can help you if you have a disability which prevents you from making your complaint in writing and we can also help if English is not your first language. Please let us know if you need any support in making a complaint.

If you are not satisfied with the response that you receive, please contact the Housing Manager at the above address or by telephoning 01255 686480 or by emailing dblack@tendringdc.gov.uk

We will make every effort to resolve your complaint but will also provide you with details of our formal Complaints Procedure should you want to take this matter further.
Need to contact us?
You can do this by:

Telephoning:
01255 686464 for rent account enquiries
01255 686468 for rent arrears enquiries
01255 686455 for right to buy enquiries
01255 686488 to report anti social behaviour or other nuisance complaints
01255 686477 to report a repair during working hours
01255 222022 to report emergency repairs only outside of normal working hours
01255 686466 for Housing Register or allocation enquiries
01255 686436 for enquiries about special needs housing or adaptations

Emailing:
housing.services@tendringdc.gov.uk
for general enquiries
HousingRepairs@tendringdc.gov.uk
to report any non urgent repairs that are needed to your home
HousingASB@tendringdc.gov.uk
to report any incidents of anti social behaviour or nuisance
tenant.involvement@tendringdc.gov.uk
to find out more about getting involved in our services

Writing to:
Life Opportunities (Housing)
Tendring District Council
Town Hall, Station Road
Clacton on Sea, Essex CO15 1SE

Visiting:
Housing Reception at the Town Hall in Clacton between 9am and 5pm Monday to Thursday and 9am to 4.45pm on Fridays