



HOUSING SERVICE

Housing Tenancy Consultation
Information Pack

July 2026

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to read this Consultation Information Pack.

You have received this pack because our records show that you are a Council tenant who may be affected by a proposal to remove the Homeline clause from your tenancy agreement.

At its meeting on 1 July 2026, the Council's Cabinet agreed, in principle, to a proposal to remove the Homeline clause from Council tenancy agreements and introduce an opt-in model for the Homeline service. Cabinet also agreed, in principle, proposed changes to the way the Homeline service is subsidised for Council tenants. Full details of the Cabinet's decision can be found here (see item 10):

www.swindon.gov.uk/tenantconsultation

Before any final decision can be made, the Council must carry out a statutory consultation on the removal of the Homeline clause with affected tenants. **No final decision has been made**, and the purpose of this consultation is to give you the opportunity to understand the proposal, consider how it could affect you, and tell us what you think before any decision is taken.

After the consultation has closed, all responses will be carefully considered before any final decision is made on whether to proceed with the proposal.

This Information Pack explains the proposal, why the Council is considering this change, what it could mean for you, and future charging arrangements should the proposal go ahead. It should be read alongside the letter sent to you, which explains your tenant category and how the proposal would affect you based on your individual circumstances.

Once you have read this Information Pack, please complete the consultation questionnaire, which can be accessed by visiting: **www.swindon.gov.uk/tenantconsultation**

Your views are important and will help inform the Council's final decision.

About Homeline

Homeline is a 24-hour emergency alarm service that helps people remain safe and independent in their own homes.

If someone feels unwell, has a fall, or needs urgent assistance, they can press their Homeline alarm to speak to trained staff at any time of the day or night.

Depending on the circumstances, Homeline staff can:

- provide reassurance over the telephone;
- contact a family member, friend or carer;
- arrange an appropriate response; or
- contact the emergency services if urgent assistance is required.

The Homeline service currently supports around 3,500 people across Swindon, including Council tenants, private customers and people who receive Homeline as part of an Adult Social Care support package.

Some Council tenants have a Homeline system installed as part of their property. Under the current Council tenancy agreement, the Homeline clause requires tenants with a Homeline system installed to pay for the service, regardless of whether they choose to use it.

This consultation is about the proposed removal of that clause from Council tenancy agreements.



Why is the Council proposing this change?

The Council is proposing to remove the Homeline clause from Council tenancy agreements.

The Council believes this proposal would give tenants greater choice about whether they receive and pay for the Homeline service, while making tenancy agreements simpler and easier to understand.

If the proposal is approved following this consultation, Homeline would no longer form part of a Council tenancy agreement. Instead, tenants who currently receive the service, and wished to continue doing so, would be able to choose whether to enter into a separate agreement (a contract) with the Council for the service. If you chose not to sign up, you would no longer receive the Homeline service and would not pay for it.

Not all Council tenants have a Homeline system installed. The Homeline system is currently closed to new users and these tenants will not be directly affected by the removal of the Homeline clause. At its meeting on 1 July 2026, the Council's Cabinet agreed to progress work to appoint an external provider to provide a replacement service. The Council's intention is that the service would re-open to new users if and when a new provider is appointed. If, at that stage, you wished to receive the service, you would be able to enter into a separate agreement (contract) with the Council for the service.

If the proposal is approved, the Council will write to affected tenants again before any changes take effect. This will explain the outcome of the consultation, any changes to your tenancy agreement, and what you would need to do if you wished to continue receiving the Homeline service.

The Council has not yet made a final decision. All responses received during the consultation will be carefully considered before any final decision is made.

What does my tenancy agreement currently say?

Your tenancy agreement includes the Homeline clause, it currently states:

"If your home has a 'Homeline' system installed this forms an integral part of your tenancy. You must pay the charges incurred for this provision even if you decide not to use the system and this must not be removed, or otherwise interfered with."

Depending on your circumstances, you may currently pay towards the cost of the service through your rent and/or service charge. Any charge you currently pay is set out in the separate letter which you will have received.

How could this affect me?

How the proposal could affect you depends on your current circumstances. The letter sent to you explains which tenant category you fall into and how the proposal would affect you. The table below provides a summary of what the proposal would mean for each tenant category if it is approved following this consultation.

If your letter says that your property does not have a Homeline system installed, you fall into the ***“Tenant without a Homeline system installed category”***.

Tenant category	Current arrangements	If the proposal is approved
Sheltered Housing (Homeline system installed)	Homeline forms part of your tenancy agreement. You currently pay the weekly charge shown in your letter regardless of whether you use the service.	Homeline would no longer form part of your tenancy agreement. You would no longer be required to pay for the service as part of your tenancy. If you chose to continue receiving the Homeline service, you could enter into a separate agreement and would only pay for the service if you chose to receive it.
Bungalow (Homeline system installed)	Homeline forms part of your tenancy agreement. You currently pay the weekly charge shown in your letter regardless of whether you use the service.	Homeline would no longer form part of your tenancy agreement. You would no longer be required to pay for the service as part of your tenancy. If you chose to continue receiving the Homeline service, you could enter into a separate agreement and would only pay for the service if you chose to receive it.
General Needs Housing (Homeline system installed) (Includes houses, flats, cottages and properties with integral garages)	Homeline forms part of your tenancy agreement. You currently pay the weekly charge shown in your letter regardless of whether you use the service.	Homeline would no longer form part of your tenancy agreement. You would no longer be required to pay for the service as part of your tenancy. If you chose to continue receiving the Homeline service, you could enter into a separate agreement and would only pay for the service if you chose to receive it.
Tenant without a Homeline system installed	The Homeline clause does not currently apply to you because your property does not have a Homeline system installed.	Your tenancy agreement would be amended to remove the Homeline clause. This would not affect your rent or any charges you currently pay. If, in the future, you wished to receive the Homeline service, you could enter into a separate agreement with the Council and would only pay for the service if you choose to receive it.

Please remember that these are the Council's proposals. No final decision has been made.

Proposed future charging arrangements

Alongside the proposal to remove the Homeline clause from Council tenancy agreements, the Council has also agreed in principle new charging arrangements for the Homeline service, should the proposal proceed.

These charging arrangements are intended to introduce a fairer, more transparent and consistent approach to subsidising the Homeline service for Council tenants. Currently, different groups of tenants receive different levels of subsidy, and these arrangements have developed over many years without a single, consistent policy. Further information about the Council's current approach to subsidisation can be found in the decision report (see the link provided in section 1 above).

Under the proposed arrangements:

- Council tenants living in sheltered housing would be eligible for a 50% subsidy, meaning the weekly charge would be £4.66 (based on the current 2026/27 service cost of £9.31 per week).
- Council tenants living in bungalows would also be eligible for a 50% subsidy, with a weekly charge of £4.66.
- Council tenants who do not live in sheltered housing or bungalows who currently pay for the Homeline service and receive a subsidy would continue to receive a 50% subsidy (£4.66 per week) for as long as they continue to receive the service. If they cancel the service or a new tenant moves into the property, the subsidy would end and would not be available again.
- Any other Council tenants who chose to receive the Homeline service would pay the full weekly charge, currently £9.31 (subject to change). As explained above, the service is currently closed to new users.

The Council is proposing these arrangements because sheltered housing and bungalow tenants can only access these properties if they meet specific eligibility criteria, such as age, disability or vulnerability. These tenants are therefore more likely to require the reassurance and support provided by the Homeline service.

Your personalised letter explains how these charging arrangements would apply to you. It shows your current weekly Homeline charge (where applicable) and the charge you would pay if the changes are implemented and you choose to continue receiving the Homeline service.

If the proposal is approved and you choose not to receive the Homeline service, you would not receive the service and would not pay a Homeline charge.

Frequently Asked Questions

Has the Council already made a decision?

No. The Council's Cabinet has agreed to consult tenants before making any final decision. All responses received during the consultation will be carefully considered before the Council decides whether to proceed.

Is this consultation about the future of the Homeline service?

No. This consultation is about the proposed removal of the Homeline clause from Council tenancy agreements. The Council's Cabinet has already agreed in principle that the Homeline service should be provided by an external provider in the future, subject to the required procurement process. This Information Pack also explains future charging arrangements so that you understand how the proposal would affect you if you chose to continue receiving the Homeline service.

Will I automatically lose my Homeline service?

No. If the proposal is approved, tenants who wish to continue receiving the Homeline service would be able to enter into a separate agreement. Before any changes are made, we will provide further information about the new arrangements, including how to continue receiving the service, the timescales involved and any action you may need to take. Tenants who do not currently have a Homeline system installed are not affected by this clause and are not required to pay for the Homeline service unless they choose to have the service provided and enter into the appropriate arrangements for it.

Will my service charge change?

If the proposal is approved, any changes to service charges will depend on your individual circumstances. Your individual letter explains what this means for you. If the proposal proceeds, the Council will write to affected tenants again explaining any changes before they take effect.

Do I have to take part in the consultation?

No. Taking part is voluntary. However, the Council encourages everyone who may be affected by the proposal to share their views to inform the decision.

What happens after the consultation closes?

The Council will review all consultation responses before making a final decision. If the proposal is approved, affected tenants will be contacted again with further information about any changes and what they need to do next.

What happens next?

The consultation will be open from 10 August 2026 to 10 September 2026.

Once the consultation has closed, the Council will review all responses received. Every response will be considered before any final decision is made. If the Council decides to proceed with the proposal, affected tenants will be contacted again before any changes take effect. This will include the appropriate notices in accordance with the Housing Act 1985 and your tenancy agreement. You will be given information about any changes to your tenancy agreement, any changes to your service charge, and what you would need to do if you wish to continue receiving the Homeline service.

How to have your say

The Council would like to hear your views on the proposed removal of the Homeline clause from Council tenancy agreements. Before completing the questionnaire, please read this Information Pack together with the letter sent to you.

You can respond in one of the following ways:

Complete the questionnaire online at www.swindon.gov.uk/tenantconsultation

Complete and return a paper questionnaire using a Freepost envelope which can be provided

The consultation closes on **10 September 2026**. Responses received after this date may not be included in the Council's consideration of the proposal.

You do not have to provide your name or contact details when completing the questionnaire. However, if you choose to provide them, we may contact you if we need to clarify your response or to keep you informed about the outcome of the consultation.

Alternative formats and support

We want everyone who wishes to take part in this consultation to be able to do so.

If you need a paper copy of this Information Pack or the consultation questionnaire, or if you would like either document in another format, such as:

- large print;
- Braille;
- audio;
- Easy Read;
- another language; or
- any other accessible format,

please contact, **TenancyConsultation@swindon.gov.uk**

If you have a visual impairment, a disability, or any other accessibility need and require support to take part in the consultation, please contact us. We will do our best to provide the support you need.

Thank you

Thank you for taking the time to read this Information Pack and take part in the consultation. Your views are important. Every response received during the consultation period will be carefully considered before the Council makes any final decision on the proposal. We appreciate you taking the time to share your views.