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Sheltered Housing - Tenant Handbook



December 2015

Housing



SWINDON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Welcome to your new home

Foreword

This residents handbook is designed to both help you with your move into your new home in sheltered accommodation and to support you with useful information that will assist you during your tenancy.

It is a simple guide to the sheltered housing service and complements your tenant's handbook, which explains in more detail your rights and responsibilities as a council tenant.

Please keep this handbook along with your tenant's handbook for easy reference. This handbook is broken down into separate sections for easy use.

Once again welcome to your new home, we hope you enjoy the friendship and security that Swindon Borough Council's Sheltered Housing offers.



Mike Ash
Head of Housing and Community Safety

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I. Introduction to Sheltered Accommodation

Our Philosophy for Sheltered Housing

Our philosophy of sheltered housing was agreed in conjunction with the Tenants Association for Sheltered Housing Schemes (TASH) It aims to:

- Provide a safe, secure, quality home for older people, remembering sheltered housing schemes are people's homes.
- Provide residents with a service that is respectful, accountable, professional and not based on stereotypes of old age.
- Respect the individual's right to make choices, whilst acknowledging the delicate balance with this and the welfare of other residents.
- Treat residents as 'partners' and consult with them on any proposed changes within their scheme or management arrangements.
- Take the health and safety of staff and residents seriously and only impose rules that are necessary for the safety, security, or the smooth running of the scheme.
- Provide a service that is respectful of individuals' cultural and ethnic values.
- Promote and maintain a friendly, happy and warm communal spirit.

The sheltered housing service will provide all tenants with...

- A service from a Sheltered Housing Officer.
- A Welfare call by your Sheltered Housing Officer, Monday to Friday and a welfare telephone call if required at weekends.
- Independent living.
- Carpet, cooker and fridge provided by the council.
- Security via door entry and single point CCTV on the front door which can be viewed through channel 7 on your TV**
- 24-hour emergency support via Sheltered Housing Officer or Homeline Emergency Response Officer.
- Respect for your own independence.
- Advice about other agencies and services who can support you
- Communal facilities which include a communal lounge and laundry.
- Maintenance of communal facilities to a high standard.
- ** (External flats and bungalows may not have this facility).



2. Your New Home

When you are allocated a sheltered housing tenancy there are a few things we ask you to do. Your Sheltered Housing Officer will assist you with this if required.

- You must make contact with your energy supplier and change your account address getting a final reading for your old property. Your Sheltered Housing Officer will give you an opening reading for your new accommodation.
- Let your Sheltered Housing Officer know the date you expect to move in so they can provide assistance to you from the day you move in.
- Allow your Sheltered Housing Officer to complete forms detailing your next of kin, emergency contacts and any medical conditions you have so that we can support you in an emergency. Your Sheltered Housing Officer will explain the weekday/ daily call service and allow you to decide whether you require this service and explain the procedure to follow if you go away. You will be given your alarm pendant and informed on how the call alarm and door entry system works in your scheme.
- Your Sheltered Housing Officer will explain what to do if the Fire Alarm Sounds.
- Your Sheltered Housing Officer will show you around the scheme, they can then advise you of what your scheme has to offer to you as a resident and give you other information such as :
 - The location of your fuse box/stopcock
 - Health and Safety Procedures

- Heating systems
- Door entry/security/CCTV
- Car parking
- Scheme lift
- Mobile Homeline Emergency Response Officers roles and the control centre
- Keys and how to obtain replacements
- Repairs reporting
- Scheme laundry, including rota's
- Scheme notice board
- Bin room and recycling facilities
- Guest flat booking and charges
- Social activities within your scheme
- Use of the communal lounge
- How to contact your Neighbourhood Housing Officer if you have queries regarding your rent/ methods of payment etc.
- Local amenities to include shops and buses and how to become involved in the decisions the Council makes about its Housing service
- TASH the Tenants Association for Sheltered Housing

TV Licence

Many Sheltered Schemes qualify for what is known as a concessionary TV Licence.

This entitles many residents to qualify for a TV licence for the reduced sum of £7.50 per year.

This scheme is administered nationally and not by the Council so may be subject to changes (for more information visit www.tvlicensing.co.uk).

You will qualify for the concession if your scheme does and you have reached a retirement age of 65 for men and 60 for women. You may also qualify if you have reached the retirement age and work part time of 15 hours or less.

If your scheme does qualify for this concession your sheltered housing officer will have to complete some paperwork and take a payment of £7.50 from you. Each subsequent year you will be required to pay £7.50 to the Sheltered Housing Officer.

If you are over 75, you can apply for a free TV licence if your scheme does not have a concession. If the scheme has the concession and you are over 75 you will receive a letter advising that you are exempt from payment.

Support of relatives and friends

The Council's Sheltered Housing team hopes the relationship between yourself and your relatives and friends will actively continue after you move into your new home and your scheme Sheltered Housing Officer will encourage this.

Your friends and family are able to visit you as often as you wish. You may use the communal lounge and kitchen facilities with your friends and family but please be mindful of other residents.

3. Sheltered Housing - What does it provide?

The Building

Communal facilities - which include a lounge and communal kitchen, laundry and gardens/ grounds.

Assisted bathing/shower rooms – wherever possible the majority of which offer a level access shower.

Guest rooms/flats - are provided for resident's family or friends who want to visit for a daily charge – speak to your Sheltered Housing Officer for details and how to book the room/flat at your scheme. If your scheme guest facility is booked you can ask about the availability of nearby guest flat facilities.

Emergency Call Alarm - this can be used to call for assistance in an emergency situation, either by pressing your pendant or pulling the orange cord hanging from the call box situated by your front door. Your Sheltered Housing Officer offers support when he/she is on duty. At all other times Homeline Emergency Response Officers will attend.

Door entry system - callers to the scheme will call a flat by entering the door number into the door panel this will bleep your flat via your intercom. The intercom will also state Front Door. By pressing the red button on the intercom and holding the button down you can talk to whoever is at the front door. If you are satisfied with the response press the green key symbol, this will release the front door to let your visitor in.

Remember please do not let anyone in you do not know.



Single point CCTV – if you are not happy with the response or want to be sure please view the front door by means of the scheme CCTV which is/or can be programmed on your television

Your Sheltered Housing Officers

The Role of the Sheltered Housing Officer

Staff working in sheltered housing are checked via the Disclosure & Barring Service and Housing Services ensure they are appropriately trained. Sheltered Housing Officers are not carers. They deliver housing related support enabling tenants to live independently with privacy, dignity, security and fulfilment. They are aware of a range of agencies available to support you and liaise with professionals in health and social care.

All our staff in sheltered housing are required to report instances of suspected abuse or situations where residents appear not to be coping independently.

Your Sheltered Housing officer has to work to a set of professional boundaries and guidance. These help protect both staff and tenants ensuring that everyone is clear about what is permitted. Staff are **not** permitted to:

Receive gifts or hospitality (other than small token items such as flowers or chocolates under £5 in value)

Handle CASH (aside from guest room bookings, Concessionary TV licence fees and in certain emergency situations)

Lend money to or borrow money from residents

Give financial advice or hold financial information about a tenant such as a PIN number

Carry out favours for tenants such as washing or cleaning

Scheme Management and Support -

Your Sheltered Housing Officer is responsible for the daily management of your sheltered scheme. They provide a daily personal call Monday to Friday to all tenants (if required) with contact to vulnerable tenants at the weekends. Their role is to assist you in independent living with support if necessary.

Every week your Sheltered Housing Officer will make an intercom call to your flat rather than a daily call to check the emergency call alarm is working. It is vital that this takes place to ensure the alarm system is operational.

In addition your Sheltered Housing Officer will make a monthly check of your alarm pendant.

At weekends your sheltered scheme is covered by Homeline Emergency Response Officers, you will not receive a morning call but should you be vulnerable – for example, having recently left hospital or are a risk from falling our Control Centre will call you on both the Saturday and Sunday. If they have any concerns for your wellbeing they will send a Homeline emergency Response Officers to your property or contact your Doctor or the emergency services.

Housing Related Support – When moving into sheltered accommodation your Sheltered Housing Officer will gather information from you on your next of kin, other contacts, your medical details and any other information that will assist us in supporting you. This information assists us should an emergency situation arise and is only shared with other agencies with your consent.

Your Sheltered Housing Officer holds a secure key to your property which would only be used in an emergency situation.

Your Sheltered Housing Officer will advise you of any communal activities that take place in your scheme and should you wish will introduce you to other tenants at the next coffee morning or other function.



The support your Sheltered Housing Officer offers you will change as the need arises, particularly if you are unwell when you may need extra support but the minimum standards you can expect from your Sheltered Housing Officer is:

- A daily call Monday to Friday with a telephone call to vulnerable tenants from the Homeline Control Centre at weekends
- Staff available Monday - Friday to offer any support assistance advice or contact with/about other agencies
- A weekly intercom check
- A monthly check of your pendant
- A weekly test of the buildings fire alarm system
- Building management, monitoring of contractors safety inspections and management of cleaning assistants.

Absences from Scheme - Tenants are asked to advise their Sheltered Housing Officer if they are going to be away from their scheme over night by means of a residents absence form. If you are going to be away from your flat early in the morning and will miss your daily call you can put an orange card out, notifying the Sheltered Housing Officer of your absence. The Sheltered Housing Officer will then mark the card for the appropriate day. Please place your orange cards out in the morning **not the night before**. If you haven't told us you are going to be away and we get no reply your Sheltered Housing Officer will enter your flat after knocking to check all is well.

Fire Safety - Sheltered Housing Officers are responsible for fire safety within the building, which includes a monthly inspection of break glasses and fire extinguishers and a monthly fire alarm test. If the fire alarms activate at any other time you must assume this is a real fire. Sheltered accommodation operates a **Stay Put and Prepare to Evacuate Policy** which has been developed in conjunction with Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service (The Fire Brigade).

You will need to take time to familiarise yourself with the fire notices displayed around the scheme. Your Sheltered Housing Officer will also assist you with this when you move in. Throughout our building we have fire doors, which close automatically in the case an alarm activation. Should we need to evacuate you from the building we will do so on the advice of the fire brigade. Once the alarm or fire has been dealt with the alarm will be silenced by the fire officer and the fire panel reset by your scheme or Homeline Emergency Response Officer or Sheltered Housing Officer. Our control centre cannot silence fire alarms as they require investigation by council personnel and in the majority of cases by the attendance of the fire brigade. You will be provided with an additional information leaflet, 'Fire Safety in Sheltered Housing', when your tenancy commences.

Health and Safety – Sheltered Housing Officers are responsible for health and safety in the communal areas of the building (not individual flats) and the external parts of the scheme. They will report any hazards they see. Should you notice anything affecting your own personal safety or the safety of others please report them to your Sheltered Housing Officer.

Scheme Cleaning - Sheltered Housing Officers are responsible for the maintenance and cleanliness of the communal facilities including supervision of cleaning staff. If you have any concerns about the cleanliness of the building please report them to your Sheltered Housing Officer.

Sheltered Scheme Management - Sheltered Housing Officers are supervised by a Sheltered Scheme Supervisor whose details can be found on your scheme notice board. Should you need to contact them please call them on the numbers listed or you can email them or write to them if you prefer.



All Sheltered Housing is managed by the Sheltered Housing Manager Mark Barnett.

Mark can be contacted in the following ways:

Post:

Mark Barnett
Sheltered Housing Manager
Housing
Swindon Borough Council
Euclid Street,
Swindon,
SN1 2JH

Tel: 01793 464428

Email: mbarnett@swindon.gov.uk

You can also direct your enquiry to your scheme supervisors, details of which are on the communal area notice board within each scheme.

4. Repairs and Maintenance

Your scheme Sheltered Housing Officer will report **Communal Repairs**, should you notice a problem in a communal area please report it to your Sheltered Housing Officer.

It is the responsibility of your Sheltered Housing Officer to follow the repair through to a satisfactory conclusion. Communal areas include the laundry, communal lounge and kitchen, communal corridors; refuse area, gardens internal and external lighting stairwells and entrances.

Repairs in your own flat/bungalow should be phoned through to the councils repairs hotline on **01793 445503**, please ensure you make a note of the job number. You should be given a convenient appointment time which will also be confirmed in writing, if this is not possible you will receive an appointment in the post if the time and date of this is not convenient please let us know by ringing **01793 445503**. If you are unable to report your own repairs your Sheltered Housing Officer will do this for you.

All employees and contractors carry official identification, please check this before letting people into your property. If you have any concerns about a callers identity do not let them into your flat call your Sheltered Housing Officer via the intercom.

For Emergency – out of hours repairs (17:00hrs - 09:00hrs) these can be reported either by pulling your pull cord or by phoning the councils control room on **01793 466453** Emergency repairs include making a property secure, accessing a property if keys have been lost, flooding, blocked drains and toilets, electrical faults/failures.



5. Resident Involvement

The Council values your views about the Housing Service being delivered to you, and your concerns about the community in which you live.

The Tenants Association for Sheltered Housing (TASH) – is a group of tenants who live in the 33 sheltered housing schemes managed by the Council. The group meets every six weeks to discuss issues which affect sheltered housing residents.

Volunteers from this group also represent views on a variety of working parties and groups.

You don't have to join a group and attend lots of meetings however, to make a difference. We have a wide range of various ways to get involved and feedback your views and comments. From postal surveys with prize draws and free tenant course, to online feedback via, www.voiceyourviews.co.uk or perhaps volunteering with a project which helps improve neighbourhoods such as RE:FRESH. The time you give is up to you – and involvement will only cost you time, not money!

Don't miss the opportunity to have your say!

For more information contact the Housing Participation Team on 01793 463673/463677 or email: getinvolved@swindon.gov.uk

6. Parking

Parking is provided on a first come first serve basis and no spaces are allocated. Sheltered Housing car parks can be busy places with many visitors such as district nurses and carers.

Please be considerate to other users and park only in marked bays or spaces. You may only park in disabled bays if you hold or are transporting a blue badge holder.

Vehicles parked in sheltered housing car parks are expected to be roadworthy, taxed and insured.

You are not permitted to park caravans or other types of trailer within the car park.

7. Mobility Scooters

If you are planning to use a mobility scooter you must speak to your Sheltered Housing Officer prior to bringing it into the building. We will do all we can to accommodate your scooter but safe storage and charging can be limited at some locations. If we are able to accommodate your request you will need to sign an agreement to have the scooter serviced and maintained

For more information please speak to your Sheltered Housing Officer who can provide you with a copy of the leaflet, 'How do I? A guide for storage of a mobility scooter in sheltered housing'.

8. Frequently asked Questions

How are the charges for my flat or bungalow made up?

Charge	What this covers
Rent - Rebateable via Housing Benefit	Repairs, maintenance, improvements and housing management such as rent collection
Service Charge - Rebateable via Housing Benefit	Communal aspects of the scheme and Sheltered Housing Officer services
Support Charge - Rebateable via entitlement to Housing Benefit	Support provided by the Sheltered Housing Officer and Homeline
*Heating Charge - Private (own accommodation) not rebateable via Housing Benefit	Heating and hot water for own flat/bungalow
*Heating Charge - Communal Areas rebateable via Housing Benefit	Heating/lighting of Communal areas
Water Charge - not rebateable	Domestic water used

* Some external bungalows and houses may not have a heating and communal heating charge as part of their rent as they have individual heating/hot water systems which require payment direct to the utility supplier.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I have to pay Council Tax?

Yes, but when you make a claim for housing benefit you can also make a claim for council tax benefit.

Can I use the communal lounge for a private function?

You can use your communal lounge for private functions e.g. birthdays; wedding anniversaries providing all tenants within the scheme are invited to join you.

How do I get Extra Keys and Door Fobs?

You can have extra keys cut at your own expense but you will need a letter from us, contact your Sheltered Housing Officer and they will request a letter for you. We will provide you with extra key fobs if necessary.

Can I make Alterations to my property?

Alterations to your property can be made but you need to obtain our permission to do this. To obtain this you should write to the Head of Housing and Community Safety detailing the work you want to do. Your Sheltered Housing Officer can assist you with this if you wish.

Can I put my own carpet in my flat?

Yes but please advise us on what you intend to use as some floor coverings can cause noise problems. For example, we would not give permission to install a laminate wooden floor.



What are Welfare Adaptations?

Minor adaptations

Minor adaptations are carried out to make homes safe and convenient to live in.

Minor adaptations include the provision of items such as:

- flashing doorbells
- smoke alarm alerts
- main entrance support rail
- grab-rails
- stair hand-rails
- internal door thresholds
- improved access and widened pathway to main entrance
- door entry intercom
- kitchen and bathroom lever taps
- WC lever flush handles and bathroom grab rails

These are carried out without the need for an assessment by an occupational therapist.

These can be obtained by contacting us on 01793 445503

Major adaptations

Major welfare adaptations are carried out to make homes more suitable to live in for people with specific needs or requirements.

Major welfare adaptations include the installation of stair lifts, easy-access or over-bath showers, step alterations and access ramps. These are only provided following an assessment and recommendation by an occupational therapist.

To request an assessment by an occupational therapist you need to contact the Council's Care Line on 0800 085 6666.

Social Services can also provide equipment such as raised toilet seats, shower seats and bath hoists or lift following an assessment by an occupational therapist.

Your Sheltered Housing Officer can assist you with this request.

Do I have to pay for Welfare Adaptations?

All minor adaptations are carried out free of charge for any sheltered housing resident.

Major adaptations for adults may be subject to a financial means test.

Can I have my own cooker and fridge?

Sheltered tenancies are offered with a cooker and fridge – but should you want to bring your own you are more than welcome, but there is no connection for gas cookers in most sheltered accommodation and the Council cannot accept liability for future repairs.

How do I obtain Satellite TV?

All our sheltered housing have communal satellite dishes and digital aerials. Should you wish to subscribe to Sky you should contact them on 0870 580 0874. You must advise Sky when contacting them that you live in a scheme that already has a communal satellite dish. You are not permitted to erect other satellite dishes around the scheme without permission. We do not have sky+ facility at all schemes.

What are my Sheltered Housing Officer's Hours?

Sheltered Housing Officers work Monday to Thursday 8am till 4.30pm and on a Friday from 8am till 4pm.

If your sheltered housing officer is to be on holiday or absent we will cover your morning call Monday – Friday by sending a relief sheltered housing officer from another of our sheltered schemes.

Once they have completed the morning call in your building they will switch your alarm system over to our control centre so that you can summon assistance from Homeline Emergency Response Officers in an emergency support situation.

What happens when I need extra support or care?

If your support needs change, our sheltered housing officers will do their best to accommodate them. Additional support may be provided by Council staff, who can help with any housing related issues to include rent arrears, claiming benefits and can also refer you to other agencies involved in care and support.

What if I need help claiming benefits?

Our Sheltered Housing Officers can help you with general form filling, but it maybe more appropriate to refer you to a Floating support Officer who will be able to assist with claims for benefits such as Housing and Council Tax Benefit, Community Care Grants, Disability Living Allowance and also liaise with other agencies on your behalf.

Can my family stay overnight?

Yes, they can but you are reminded that if this happens too often it may be considered inappropriate and they will be asked to book the guest flat.

Can I use the laundry at any time of day?

No, generally we ask that tenants do not use the laundry before 8am or after 8pm at night in consideration of tenants living close to or above the laundry. Tenants are reminded that the washing and drying equipment provided in sheltered accommodation is **solely for the use of residents**. Relatives are permitted to use the facilities ONLY for the purpose of helping residents with their washing.

Do I need Household Insurance in Sheltered Accommodation?

Whilst all our sheltered buildings are insured your individual flat contents are not. Swindon Borough Council has arranged a contents insurance scheme, for its tenants. More information and the application form can be obtained by calling 01793 464657. For ease of payment the weekly charge is added to your rent. We strongly recommend you consider taking out insurance for your personal property.

What if I need a Repeat Prescription?

Repeat Prescriptions are yours or your family's responsibility. In many cases a home delivery service can be set up by the doctors own surgery and if not either your local chemist or Pharmacy Plus Direct (0800 389 0044)

In an Emergency or sudden illness your Sheltered Housing Officer may organise the collection of an urgent prescription but regrettably this can't be done on a regular basis.

What if I need a Doctor to Visit?

If you require a home visit by your Doctor, you should ring the surgery in the normal way. In an emergency or sudden illness your Sheltered Housing Officer or our control centre staff will help you to do this.



7. Useful Contacts

Age UK	0800 169 6565
Careline (Social Services)	0800 085 6666
Citizen Advice Bureau	0844 499 4114
Disability Living Allowance Helpline	03457 123456
Disabled Car Parking	01793 463725
DSS Pensions and Benefits	0345 6060265
Great Western Hospital	01793 604020
Housing Benefit	0345 3022316
Housing Repairs	01793 445503
NHS Direct	111
Police (non emergency)	101
Swindon Borough Council (main switchboard)	01793 445500

8. Comments/ Complaints or Compliments

Should you have any of the above you write to us or fill in the tear off portion of our customer care leaflet, which can be found in all our sheltered schemes. You can then either hand the form in at any of our offices or post it to Customer Services.

Customer Services
Swindon Borough Council
Civic Offices
Euclid Street
Swindon
SN1 2JH

You can also:

Email: customerservices@swindon.gov.uk
Visit: www.swindon.gov.uk and fill in a form online.
Phone: 445503.

In Person: Swindon Direct, Beckhampton Street, Swindon,
SN1 2JY

We aim to acknowledge your complaint within **2 working days** and reply to it within **10 working days**.



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How YOU can have your say

You have a 'right' to influence how services are delivered to you, and the quality of those services!

The Tenants Association for Sheltered Housing provides a great opportunity to meet regularly with other residents to consider the issues that affect all those in sheltered housing, and to help continue to improve the service that you receive.

This could include anything from proposed changes in service delivery, upcoming Government proposals or even changes to the Benefits service.

You can simply choose to come along to meetings and take part in these discussions as an 'Observer Member', or become an 'Elected Representative' with responsibility for keeping fellow residents informed, working closely with your scheme's Sheltered Housing Officer.

Meetings aren't for you? ... then why not ask us about the Housing Sounding Board, which you can do from the comfort of your own home!



If you'd like to know more, we'd love to hear from you
Tel: 01793 463677 / email: getinvolved@swindon.gov.uk

This information is available on the internet at www.swindon.gov.uk
It can be produced in a range of languages and formats (such as large print, audio, Braille or other accessible formats) by contacting the Customer Services Department.

Tel: 01793 445500 Fax: 01793 463331 E-mail: customerservices@swindon.gov.uk