

Sheltered Housing Consultation – Questionnaire Outcomes

Questionnaires were sent out to all 1386 sheltered housing tenants and of these, 467 were completed and returned. The results below show percentages of those 467 responses

Section A. Demand for Sheltered Housing

There are a number of sheltered housing schemes which are becoming harder to let, resulting in properties being left empty and a loss of rent.

To reverse this trend, we propose to let some sheltered properties to applicants who are 45 years and above, but in a sensitive manner.

Question A1.

Do you agree with this proposed approach? (Please tick one box)

Yes – I agree	23%	No – I do not agree	55%	I neither agree or disagree	21%	No response	1%
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Question A2.

What do you see as the **advantages** of letting sheltered property to applicants who are 45 years and over?

The answers fell broadly into 10 categories

1. No comment or don't know
2. It provides a solution for lack of housing stock and/or long waiting lists for younger people
3. No advantage and/or disagree with the suggestion
4. Don't believe they cannot be let - need to address the issue of finding suitable people e.g. making online form more accessible
5. It would introduce younger people into schemes which are predominantly full of elderly people; younger people can help older people/takes away stigma of old people/younger could help with jobs/people feel more secure
6. It would provide access to supported housing for younger vulnerable or disabled people
7. It could work in some schemes depending on the layout
8. It would prevent rent loss for the Council and keep rents down
9. It would only work for older people i.e. over 50s / happy if sensitively let
10. It could release larger homes - younger people downsizing

Question A3.

What do you see as the **disadvantages** of letting sheltered property to applicants who are 45 years and over?

The answers fell broadly into 10 categories

1. No comment / no concerns
2. Concerns regarding noise and lifestyle of younger people
3. Problems with parking
4. Concerns regarding parking and noise
5. Concerns that younger people would have children living with them or visiting them
6. Sheltered schemes are designed only for old people / old & young people do not mix well
7. An older age group e.g. 50-60 would be more appropriate
8. The proposal would disadvantage older people - there would be less sheltered housing available for older people
9. The proposal would be acceptable provided people were vetted first for their suitability
10. Miscellaneous comments

Question A4. What else do you think the Council could do to make sure that empty properties in sheltered schemes are let as quickly as possible?

The answers fell broadly into 15 categories

1. Reduce rent / offer incentives to move
2. Advertise properties more effectively
3. Provide more assistance with applying & bidding
4. Relaxing the allocations policy
5. Better transport links /storage for mobility scooters
6. Encourage downsizing
7. Re-educate - sheltered housing is not residential care
8. Make better use of the facilities
9. Improved standards of property (repairs)
10. Speed up void / lettings process
11. Remove the requirement for support needs
12. Decommission or sell blocks that are hard to let
13. Changes to SHOs
14. Improve accessibility
15. Use hard to let flats for respite care

Question A5.

Are there any other options that the council should consider to address the challenge of empty properties?

The answers fell broadly into 16 categories

1. Reduce rent / offer incentives to move
2. Advertise properties more effectively
3. Provide more assistance with applying & bidding for properties
4. Relaxing the allocations policy to allow more people to qualify
5. Better transport links /storage for mobility scooters
6. Encourage downsizing
7. Re-educate - sheltered housing is not residential care
8. Make better use of the facilities
9. Improved standards of property (repairs)
10. Speed up void / lettings process
11. Remove the requirement for support needs
12. Decommission or sell blocks that are hard to let
13. Changes to SHOs
14. Improve accessibility
15. Use hard to let flats for respite care or people with Learning disabilities
16. Increase age requirement to 55 and above

Section B. Sheltered Housing Officers

The sheltered housing schemes are currently managed by Sheltered Housing Officers, with one officer per scheme.

Of the 467 responses 445 (95%) already lived in sheltered accommodation

Question B1.

How often do you speak to your Sheltered Housing Officer:

Daily	About once a week	About once a month	Rarely	Never	No response
58%	11%	8%	16%	5%	1%

Question B2.

Why did you choose to move into your sheltered housing scheme? (Please tick all boxes that apply)

Location to family or social network	Closeness to amenities e.g. shops, doctors	Sense of security and community feeling	Wanted to downsize	The facilities provided at the complex	Other
17%	16%	27%	10%	17%	13%

The Council proposes to improve the sheltered housing service by creating mobile teams of Sheltered Housing Officers who will be given new responsibilities for managing your scheme.

This will include managing the processes for empty properties, repairs and building maintenance, and for contracts such as cleaning. The sheltered Housing Officers do not currently do any of these things.

Working in teams, a Sheltered Housing Officer will visit each scheme on a daily basis, undertaking floor inspections and carrying out all statutory responsibilities such as fire, health & safety checks.

Morning calls and calling in on tenants who have asked for additional support will still be provided, but the Sheltered Housing Officer's time will not be spent at just one scheme throughout the day.

The Council believes that team working will create a more flexible service, allowing sheltered housing officers to offer tenants a wider range of services.

Question B3.

Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes – I agree	35%	No – I do not agree	37%	I neither agree or disagree	24%	No Response	4%
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Question B4.

What services do you currently use? (Please tick all boxes that apply)

Morning Call	I have a Support Plan	Monthly resident meetings	Social activities –e.g. Bingo, Lunches	None
60%	31%	41%	50%	19%

Question B5.

Do you believe the proposed change to the Sheltered Housing Officer's role will affect the services you currently receive?

No	41%	Yes	46%	No Response	13%
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If yes- Please give details of how you think the service will be affected:

The answers fell broadly into 7 categories

1. Concerns that no SHO available during day means a loss of security & continuity – tenants would not feel safe
2. The service would be improved
3. The service will be less personal
4. Tenants would have to wait longer in an emergency or when they need to speak with the SHO
5. Costs would be increased
6. There would be a loss of entertainment / social activities
7. SHOs will have too much to do and would waste time travelling

Question B6.

Are there services currently not offered to you, that you would like to see the Sheltered Housing Officer provide?

No	17%	Yes	60%	No Response	23%
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If yes – Please give details

The answers fell broadly into 10 categories

1. More information on available services
2. More social activities
3. More contact with SHOs
4. Weekend calls
5. A laundry service
6. Better cleaning of communal areas
7. Support with repairs
8. More support when the tenant is ill or in need
9. More security support
10. Help with IT skills

Question B7.

If the Council were able to deliver the extra services you have described, would you be prepared to pay an additional weekly charge to meet the service costs: (Please tick one box)

I would be prepared to pay £1 to £2 extra per week	I would be prepared to pay £3 to £5 extra per week	I would be prepared to pay £6 to £10 extra per week	I would not be prepared to pay an additional charge for the service	No Response
15%	9%	5%	47%	24%

Section C. Service Charges

There is a cost associated with providing a Sheltered Housing Officer to deliver services to a scheme. The Council can recover this cost weekly through service charges; this charge is in addition to rent.

Currently, sheltered housing tenants do not pay for this service.

It is proposed that tenants living in sheltered schemes should pay a service charge for the services provided by the Sheltered Housing Officer.

Question C1.

Do you agree with this proposal? (Please tick one of the boxes)

Yes – I agree	20%	No – I do not agree	57%	I neither agree or disagree	17%	No Response	5%
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If you disagree, please say why:

The answers fell broadly into 8 categories

1. Cannot afford extra cost
2. Don't require extra service
3. Rents are high enough –the charges should already be included
4. Not fair that those on HB do not pay
5. Service provided is not worth extra cost
6. Charges were removed so why should we pay now?
7. Pensioners should be subsidised by others
8. I disagree but would reluctantly pay

There are three levels of service being considered – described under the 3 options below.

The estimated service charge which would apply to each option is shown.

- Option 1

Sheltered Housing Officers would be responsible for the day to day management of the scheme and support tenants to live independently. This will provide the same level of service currently offered.

This service would operate Monday to Friday with an estimated service charge of £11.50 per week.

- Option 2

Sheltered Housing Officers work as teams, with responsibility for schemes as well as additional duties for the management of tenancies and contractor services. The management of sheltered housing through a team of Sheltered Housing Officers allows us to offer a more consistent service across the borough

Appendix 4

This service would operate Monday to Friday with an estimated service charge of £9 per week.

- Option 3

This option reduces the number of Sheltered Housing Officers available to work at each scheme. There would be a reduced Sheltered Housing Officer presence at schemes throughout the week, and very limited scope to offer enhancements to the service.

This service would operate Monday to Friday with an estimated service charge of £5 per week.

Question C2.

Please choose from the three options above, the one which you most agree with: (Please tick one box)

Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	No Response
24%	10%	23%	43%

Question C3.

Is there anything else that you would like to tell us about sheltered housing?

The answers fell broadly into 14 categories

1. Happy with current status - do not want change
2. Do not want to pay more money
3. Don't agree with any options
4. Cannot afford to pay more money
5. Problems with repairs/cleaning / security so not willing to pay more
6. Put in lifts
7. Happy to pay / suggest introduce charges gradually
8. Allow priority to people needing to move downstairs in same block
9. Do not agree with mixing age groups
10. Issues with Services currently provided
11. Would reluctantly accept charge if it meant keeping their SHO
12. Current facilities not always available e.g. communal hall
13. Concerns that those on HB will not pay - why should those who pay full rent
14. Current service is not good enough