

PO36 Sheltered Housing Policy

Approval

Approved by Tenants' Forum Seniors Sub Group	DATE 19 May 2011
Approved by Board	DATE 25 May 2011
Due for Review	DATE May 2012

Review undertaken

Resident involvement <i>As agreed with Tenants' Forum</i>	Consultation with Seniors Group and Portfolio Holder
Equality Impact Assessment	Approved by Director of Customer Services and Operations on 18 June 2009
Other consultation	

1. Scope of policy

This policy sets out Soha's approach to providing and managing older persons' sheltered accommodation and related services. Soha provides quality services and accommodation for our older tenants who wish to live in sheltered accommodation.

The policy recognises that Soha plays an important role in service delivery to older and sometimes vulnerable people. Our policy recognises that we need to maintain and develop accommodation and services for people who live in our sheltered homes whilst also exploring opportunities for providing services to those living in our general needs housing.

The policy supports South Oxfordshire District Council's (SODC) Older Peoples' Housing Strategy and will be reviewed and adapted in the light of the changing demands and aspirations of existing and future tenants. It recognises that we will need to review and constantly evaluate our services against new models of housing and support to ensure they meet the needs of the diversity of our tenants and their expectations.

Soha manages approximately 780 units of sheltered housing across 36 schemes. This policy covers all aspects of managing the accommodation and services. All Scheme Managers have a handbook outlining the procedures that support this policy.

Soha recognises that sheltered housing schemes are a resource that can benefit the wider community. Many of the schemes have social and health and well-being activities that involve people from the local community, ensuring that tenants are involved in wider community activities.

Some schemes are in greater demand than others and we will continue to review schemes with bedsits that are in low demand, and consider new schemes that offer housing and services that older people will want.

2. Aim

Soha works in partnership with a range of agencies to ensure that the tenants in the sheltered schemes receive full support to maintain independence. We work closely with Social Services, local GP practices, Care agencies, Supporting People Teams and Community Mental Health Teams.

Soha promotes equality and diversity and we apply our Sheltered Housing policy consistently and fairly. Soha will adhere to the principles in the Equality Act 2010 and will not discriminate against age, race, religion and belief, sex (meaning gender) and sexual orientation; and also the protected characteristics of disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity.

Under the Act people are not allowed to discriminate, harass or victimise another person because they belong to a group that the Act protects, are thought to belong to one of those groups or are associated with someone who does.

3. Policy Statement

Soha will work with local authorities, statutory, voluntary and private agencies to:

- Provide excellent sheltered housing accommodation and work with other agencies to get support for tenants.
- Promote independent living
- Provide choice for tenants living in sheltered properties such as in policies concerning pets and mobility scooters
- Respect all tenant's rights to freedom of choice, dignity, privacy and confidentiality
- Maximise resident involvement
- Publish clear standards about the services provided
- Risk assess the sheltered schemes
- Have clear procedures in place, including fire procedures

Our sheltered housing policy will reflect good practice and meet legal requirements at all times. We will continually monitor good practice and statutory requirements.

4. Implementation

Soha has clear procedures for each aspect of the sheltered housing policy. The Scheme Managers' handbook gives guidance to staff and sets out clear joint working protocols with key agencies covering aspects of the service such as information sharing and confidentiality, key contacts and communication processes.

4.1 Support

Scheme Managers provide support to tenants by:

- Helping new tenants to settle in to their new home and meet residents in weekly scheme surgeries or by appointment
- Reporting and monitoring repairs and maintenance work in communal areas.
- Signposting and providing literature to tenants and their families to ensure access to statutory, voluntary and private agencies.
- Encouraging social activities and resident involvement.
- Liaising with OCC's housing related support provider, Community Voice

4.2 Risk Assessment

Soha has a duty to provide a safe living environment in the shared areas in sheltered housing schemes. Scheme Managers risk assess all aspects of the service that impact upon the welfare and or health of tenants, staff or visitors to the scheme. This includes but is not limited to:

- Carrying out regular safety and security checks.
- Ensuring that the shared areas are warm, clean, secure and well-maintained.
- Testing fire alarm systems and communal smoke detectors.
- Ensuring effective administration of the schemes
- Communicating with and consulting tenants about policies and procedures that support health and safety.

4.3 Pets on Schemes

Soha has an individual pet policy for each sheltered scheme. Soha will review these every three years in consultation with tenants of each scheme.

4.4 Mobility Scooters

When a tenant purchases a mobility scooter it is their responsibility to provide an appropriate and safe storage space with access to power within their own property. Scheme Managers ensure that these scooters do not contravene health & safety legislation. Soha is exploring the scope to assist with storage space in some schemes.

4.5 Privacy and Confidentiality

Soha has a confidentiality policy and information security policy. Although sheltered housing involves a level of communal living tenants do have the right to privacy within their homes and all Soha staff will respect this.

4.6 Training

All staff will receive ongoing training in order that they understand and follow necessary procedures so that they fulfil the objectives of this policy and to keep up to date with policy development in older people's housing.

4.7 Scheme Improvements

Where Soha plans improvements to sheltered schemes it will actively involve tenants in the decisions matters such as choices of colours and furnishings. Soha will also ask for their ideas in the weekly scheme surgery meetings on how we can improve the physical environment and use information from the regular estate inspections.

5. Resident Involvement

Soha has consulted on this policy with the Tenants' Forum Seniors Sub Group, the official representative body for older people at Soha, including sheltered housing. Consultation on changes to services or charges will take place with residents in a systematic way with the assistance of Scheme Managers. Resident involvement is actively promoted amongst residents who may choose to become involved at scheme level or in a wider role.

7. Equality and Diversity

The policy sits within Soha's Equality and Diversity policy and procedure. It does however recognise the importance of offering services to all residents regardless of age, race, faith, gender, disability or sexual orientation and of differentiating services to meet individual needs. In terms of daily living this may mean dietary preferences or access to places of worship as well as culturally sensitive day centres or support.

8. Complaints and Appeals

Applicants have a right of complaint and of appeal under Soha's Complaints procedure if they feel that Soha has not treated them fairly. Complaints from all sheltered housing residents are noted and service changes instigated as a result.

9. Responsibility

The Director of Customer Services and Operations is responsible for effectively implementing the Sheltered Housing Policy.

10. Monitoring and review

Soha will regularly review the Sheltered Housing Policy and will involve tenants in this process. We will gather the views of new and existing tenants from the sheltered housing surveys and use this information to evaluate tenant satisfaction with the policy process and to develop this service for tenants.

Soha will review this policy no later than September 2012 (subject to any legislation or sector developments requiring earlier review) to ensure that it continues to meet its objectives and reflects good practice.

11. Context

Data Protection Policy PO10

Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations (amended 1999)

Pet Policy

Mobility Scooter Policy

Soha Equality and Diversity policy PO02

The Equality Bill 2009

Vulnerable Adults Policy PO28

Publications

Lifetime Homes Lifetime neighbourhoods: A National Strategy for housing in an Ageing society, (CLG, DH, DWP, 2008)

Supporting People Programme Grant for Excellent Authorities (CLG, 2008)