

TENANT/STAFF CONSULTATION

Background

Phase 1 of the Supported Housing Review was presented to Scrutiny Committee in November 2016 when it was agreed that the second phase would be completed by November 2017 including the development of a five year business plan.

Tenant Consultation

Tenant consultation meetings were held in every sheltered housing scheme during April/May 2017. 17 meetings were held, attended by a total of 204 tenants (40%).

Tenants were generally happy with the reduction in Supported Housing Officer (SHO) visits from 5 to 3 per week, but would not like them to reduce any further, and are concerned that the service will continue to diminish.

Tenants feel that the SHO's don't give them enough time to talk, although if they asked for help or support they would get it.

A majority of tenants agreed that having the alarm system and out of hours response service is a very important element of living in sheltered housing.

The idea of developing a "drop-in" service for tenants was popular with the more able tenants, e.g. a SHO would be on site at a pre-determined time when tenants would be able to come down to the common room to see them, this gives tenants more flexibility over the time and type of contact, however frailer tenants would prefer visits to continue.

It became clear during the consultation that tenants are unsure what they are paying for within their support charge, therefore there needs to be more clarity.

Some tenants particularly those living outside Harlow confirmed that they did not particularly want to move into sheltered housing, but that it was a way of being able to secure a property in Harlow, confirming the need for greater pre tenancy checks to determine support need.

Tenants were informed of the deletion in funding from Essex County Council for older persons services, however they are concerned about the cost of the service moving forward

Staff Consultation

A questionnaire was sent to all staff asking for their views on current and future service provision.

Opinion on the staffing structure was split with some staff preferring separate teams for Sheltered Housing and Telecare and other staff preferring the existing structure with the generic job description.

A majority of staff feel that the most important aspect of their role is the regular contact they have with service users.

A majority of staff acknowledge that telecare is a growing resource, it is therefore imperative that this is marketed to maximise income.

Health and Safety and equipment testing is seen as another important part of their role.

It is felt that the management of the communal areas in de-commissioned schemes should sit with Housing Management.

Tenant participation meetings are not very well attended and staff feel they should be reduced to twice annually

Staff were asked: moving forward how would you like to see the service being delivered in 5 years' time: the majority response detailed below:

- "this is a very good service that is valued by customers, it would be great to offer this in the next 5 years.