

To:
OPPB members
Pensioners Forum
Southwark Pensioners Action Group
Pensioners Centre Southwark Council
Alzheimer's Society
Community Action Southwark
RSL providers of sheltered housing
Age Concern
And Other Stakeholders

Older People Commissioning Team
Direct dial: 020 7525 0775
Email: john.hebditch@southwark.gov.uk
Date: 19 July 2011

Consultation on proposals for the reconfiguration of Sheltered Housing in Southwark

As a result of the unprecedented reduction in the level of funding that the council receives from Central Government, the council is considering changes to the future funding of sheltered housing services. These proposals, if agreed, would come into effect in the financial year 2012-13. Please see the attached briefing which profiles the current sheltered housing provision in Southwark.

The proposed changes can be summarised as follows:

- To deliver a standardised single provider support service across all sheltered tenants including both those in Registered Social Landlord accommodation and Council management sheltered provision.
- To reduce the level of funding from the council from the current level of spend. (By an as yet determined level) to contribute towards the council's savings targets required as a result of reduction in government funding.
- To mitigate the impact of these changes by shifting current eligible support arrangements and costs into service charges that are eligible to be covered by Housing Benefit. This would include support regarding repairs, security and access to the building, rent payment support etc. A number of Councils and Registered Social Landlords have completed this work recently, and the impact of reduction in funding for support services has been significantly reduced for the residents.

Officers from the council have been working with council and RSL sheltered providers over the last few months to develop these proposals

I am now writing to formally consult with your organisation about the council's proposals for the reconfiguration of sheltered housing services in Southwark.

The outcomes of this continued joint working, this consultation exercise and the views of sheltered tenants, providers and stakeholders will be incorporated into a report to be considered by the council's cabinet in the autumn of this year. This cabinet report will then make a decision on what steps the council intends to take.

There will be a separate consultation exercise the Council will be conducting with its own sheltered tenants.

Until such time, these proposals have not been agreed.

Therefore, we are keen to hear your views on the following areas;--

1. Your views on the proposal to establish a single support service covering all RSL and council sheltered properties.
2. Your views on proposal to mitigate the impact of any reduction in funding by transferring eligible costs to service charges as applicable.
3. Whether you think that the council should implement a transitional protection scheme for those tenants who would not be eligible for housing benefit to cover this service charge.
4. What would be your views of there being a single community alarm provider in the borough?
5. Do you believe that there are any equalities issues in your service that may impact on our proposals and if so would you provide details?
6. If there are any further points that you would like to make regarding these proposals.

We will also be holding a sheltered tenant event towards the end of July to seek views from tenants directly.

I would be grateful if you could respond in writing to me by **Friday 12 August 2011** if you would like more information or clarification on any of these points, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Hebditch". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

John Hebditch
Joint Commissioning Officer

Circulation List

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