

Sheltered housing

Sheltered housing

This booklet is for all our sheltered housing schemes and runs alongside your tenancy agreement.

It explains what sheltered housing is, what facilities our schemes normally have, what services your Sheltered Housing Officer can and cannot provide for you and what your responsibilities are as a tenant of Plymouth City Council. In short it tells you about living in your new home in sheltered housing.

To make the handbook easy to follow, we have arranged the information as answers to questions often asked by our tenants.

Contents

	Page
What is sheltered housing?	4
Communal facilities	4
Sheltered lifestyle	6
What is a Sheltered Housing Officer?	7
What are their duties?	8
What Sheltered Housing Officers do not do	10
Tenancy termination & pets	11
Help in an emergency	11
How you can help	12
Support plans	13
Supporting People programme	14
What if I want to make changes to my home	15
Smoking policy	15
Fire precautions	16
Scooters	16
List of schemes	17
Sheltered housing philosophy	17

What is sheltered housing?

Plymouth City Council provides sheltered housing for the older population of Plymouth; we work together with housing associations that also provide this type of housing.

The housing is provided for people who are physically or emotionally frail and need the support that the sheltered housing staff can give them.

Plymouth City Council's sheltered housing consists of clusters of bungalows or blocks of self-contained flats (some with lift access), ranging from 17 to 67 units per cluster (scheme).

Each scheme has a Sheltered Housing Officer (SHO) who is there to monitor your wellbeing and is available if there is an emergency. The Sheltered Housing Officer usually works normal office hours on a flexi-time basis. They are there to offer support and advice if you need it, but not to intrude.

Each tenant has an alarm system (Call 24 Hour) to summon help 24 hours a day 7 days a week should this be required.

Social activities, tenant participation and good neighbour policy are actively encouraged.

Communal facilities

What communal facilities are there at Sheltered Housing?

Most, but not all of our Sheltered Housing Schemes have one or more of the following communal facilities:

Communal room or lounge

Each scheme has a lounge, usually with a small kitchen attached. This is seen to be the centre of social life at the scheme. You will be encouraged to socialise with the other tenants in your scheme and to help each other when and where you can. Talk to your Sheltered Housing Officer to find out what events take place there or see the

Notice board

In some schemes you can use the lounge for a private party/meeting if you arrange it with your Sheltered Housing Officer (there will be a small charge for this).

Sometimes our sheltered housing staff may need to use the lounge for meetings or training, and sometimes we allow other people to use it too, **but tenants' functions have priority.**

Laundry room

Washing machines and tumble dryers may have been provided for your use. Your Sheltered Housing officer will show you how to use them. Please note that these facilities are for your own personal laundry and are not for the use of non-tenants or family.

Guest room

Some schemes may have a guest room. This can be useful if you have friends or family who live outside the area (there is a small charge for the use of this room). If you do not have a guest room on your scheme, it may be possible for your visitors to book into another scheme, please ask your Sheltered Housing Officer.

To reserve the guest room, simply book it ahead of time with your Sheltered Housing Officer.

Bookings are normally on a "first come, first-served" basis, but priority is given to any emergencies. In the event of an emergency, the guest(s) may be asked to vacate the room. Length of stay is usually a maximum of a week, but can be longer at the discretion of the scheme officer

Be assured we are more than happy for people to visit you at any time, and stay with you, short-term, in your own property.

Gardens

Our contractors look after the communal grounds and gardens surrounding the sheltered schemes. If you would like to help maintain

the gardens or potter, just ask your Sheltered Housing Officer. We do however request that you do not feed the birds or animals in and around the scheme gardens, as this could encourage vermin.

Library

This service is provided for our tenants, and the books are available in the communal rooms. They are changed regularly. Audio books can be provided if requested.

Should you require books in other languages please speak to the Sheltered Housing Officer who will try to accommodate you.

Sheltered lifestyle

What is the lifestyle like within the scheme?

We encourage tenants to take part in all the activities that are available on each scheme.

Social committee

You may find that there is a social committee in your scheme, which organises social activities and outings. This committee is typically made up of tenants and elected by the tenants. The activities can be open not only to tenants but to your family and friends as well. The sheltered team is encouraging these groups on all schemes.

Communal lounge

As mentioned before, each scheme typically has a lounge where tenants can gather for informal activities such as watching the television, reading, playing cards or just chatting. Some schemes have quiet rooms for reading and puzzles, and some even have computers.

What is a Sheltered Housing Officer?

Each of our schemes has a trained Sheltered Housing Officer. They are there to give support, advice and to help you live as independently as possible.

To do this, they have links to and provide a wide range of services to make your lifestyle comfortable, secure and enjoyable.

Here are some of the duties a Sheltered Housing Officer may be involved in -

When you move in

They will welcome you, show you around the communal areas, explain the “alarm call system” and other facilities and also tell you about the local services and social activities.

Once you are a tenant

They will visit you regularly to find out if you need anything and make sure further help is provided if you need it.

The Sheltered Housing Officer will discuss with you a “service level agreement” and complete a “support plan” - both of these are explained more fully later on.

If you have an emergency

Pull your emergency cord, or press your pendant, and they will respond.

If you are unwell

They will contact your doctor and family, if requested, or will make that decision, if they feel you are incapable, and will help to make the very best arrangements for your care, always respecting your wishes.

If you want to talk

Either for some special help or just to have a chat, they are there, and they will always be respectful of your privacy and your right to confidentiality.

Duties include:

- A Sheltered Housing Officer's working week is 37 hours, flexible Monday to Friday.
- When a Sheltered Housing Officer is on duty he/she will give emergency help and general assistance in the case of accident or illness, until local emergency services are at hand or assistance from relatives can be obtained.
- The Sheltered Housing Officer will act on behalf of the tenant, if required, to liaise with:
 - (a) Other housing departments
 - (b) Doctors
 - (c) Home care organisers
 - (d) Meals on wheels
 - (e) Relatives
 - (f) Social workers
 - (g) Department of Work and Pensions
 - (h) Any other relevant agencies
- The Sheltered Housing Officer is required to keep a current register of the doctors and nearest relatives of each of the tenants and telephone numbers of health and Social Services to help carry out their duties effectively.
- The Sheltered Housing Officer is responsible, where appropriate, for overseeing the cleanliness and tidiness of the guest bedrooms, common room, all communal kitchens, bathrooms and WCs, laundry rooms and corridors.
- The Sheltered Housing Officer is responsible for booking and receiving payments in respect of the guest bedrooms where applicable.

- The Sheltered Housing Officer is responsible for giving all details regarding health and next of kin to the Call 24 Hour control centre when there is a new tenant. These details, of course, will be confidential to the control centre.
- The Sheltered Housing Officer maintains a logbook in which all incidents and emergencies must be recorded.
- The Sheltered Housing Officer is responsible for reporting any matters requiring attention, such as repairs and any obvious defects or faults in communal areas.
- The Sheltered Housing Officer ensures that any reasonable service required by the tenant is requested as soon as possible, but must encourage the tenants to maintain their own life-style and independence.
- The Sheltered Housing Officer will carry out health and safety checks on a monthly basis.
- The Sheltered Housing Officer is responsible for carrying out regular tests of the Fire Alarm systems.
Fire appliances (Fire Extinguishers) will be serviced every 12 months; Sheltered Housing Officers should check the service has been carried out.
- The Sheltered Housing Officer will be required to keep an inventory of all equipment and furniture in the communal areas and maintain such records as may be required.

With all the support they give you, Sheltered Housing Officers cannot take the place of your family and friends. Therefore, we hope that you maintain contact with your family and friends and that they continue to give you as much support as they possibly can.

What Sheltered Housing Officers do not do

Although the Sheltered Housing Officers do many things for you personally and for the scheme, there are some things they cannot do:

Nursing

They are not qualified nurses, so they are not allowed to change dressings or give medication of any kind (such as administering drugs or helping with ear or eye drops).

They can however make arrangements with your doctor or health authority, such as regular visits by the District Nurse if requested.

Cooking and shopping

Cooking your meals or shopping is not part of the Sheltered Housing Officers' duties (remember, you are meant to be living as independently as possible). However, if you urgently need a prescription, or cannot do your own shopping or cooking for a while, they will find someone to give you the help you need, whether family, home care, or voluntary agencies.

Banking

They are not allowed to handle your money. Therefore, they cannot accept money from you, either for safekeeping or for any other reason. This also includes collecting pensions.

Gifts to staff

It sometimes happens that tenants wish to give a gift to a member of staff on special occasions, but we have strict rules on what staff may and may not accept. Your Sheltered Housing Officer can explain these limitations to you.

Tenancy termination

A form is available from your Sheltered Housing Officer for terminating tenancies. The termination time is a minimum of four weeks, but depending upon circumstances this may be reduced or possibly extended, in discussion with the Sheltered Housing Office.

Pets

These are only accepted in our dispersed schemes. You also need to be aware that in the event of a change in your circumstances, that your family will be responsible for the welfare of your pet.

Help in an emergency

How Do I Get Help In An Emergency?

Help can be summoned by pulling a cord or pressing your pendant. When the Sheltered Housing Officer is on duty they will respond. However, when off duty we have an emergency alarm system in place that gives you peace of mind knowing that you can easily summon help when you need it.

The alarm centre is called Call 24 Hour.

This service can be used to call for help at any time - if you are suddenly taken ill, have an accident or are faced with a problem. Call 24 Hour staff will answer your call. They are always on hand to speak to you and obtain any additional help that is required.

Even if you cannot speak, the staff will know who is calling because each alarm has its own special call number.

Your Sheltered Housing Officer will explain the emergency system to you when you move in and will also show you how to use it.

Please note, for your safety, that cords SHOULD NOT be tied up or shortened.

Remember that there is always someone available to help you in an emergency or if you have a problem 24 hours a day every day. They can also be contacted by telephone on 776000.

Spare keys

A key to your home is kept within the Sheltered Housing Officer's office on the scheme. So it is important that you do not add any other locks to your front door, without supplying a spare key.

These keys will only be used in an emergency by the Sheltered Housing Team or emergency services, if they need to get into your home; for example if you have had a fall and cannot get to your door to open it.

It is a good idea for a friend or relative who lives nearby to hold a spare key for you in addition to the Sheltered Housing Officer.

How you can help

There are a number of things that you can do to assist the Sheltered Housing Officers. Here are some of the things that you could do.

Personal data

Give them all the information they might need in an emergency, such as how to contact your next-of-kin and your doctor. There are support plans for this, which your Sheltered Housing Officer will give you and help you to fill out. These are updated on a regular basis, but it is your responsibility to notify them of any changes.

Tell your Sheltered Housing Officer about any special health problems you have, such as diabetes or an allergy to certain medication.

Going away

Please inform your Sheltered Housing Officer (or Call 24 Hour, if the Sheltered Housing Officer is away) if you are going to be away. This is for the health and safety of your property, neighbours, staff and emergency services. It saves time if there is a fire alarm or evacuation so that they do not have to look for you.

Security

Do not let anyone into your home or the common areas unless you know who they are and why they are calling. Always ask to see their identity cards if they say that they are calling for a specific purpose. Keep doors locked and ask your visitors to do the same.

In this day and age security is paramount, and we hope you will help in keeping your home safe.

Support plans

When you first move into sheltered housing, the Sheltered Housing Officer will meet with you to discuss a Support Plan.

All sheltered housing providers have introduced these plans to help monitor that you are receiving the correct level of support.

This is a confidential document.

This means that the only people who have access to this information are YOU and staff on a “need to know” basis.

If you would like to see any information that is kept on files about you, please contact your Sheltered Housing Officer.

Other service providers, for example, Social Services, will only be contacted if you agree to us doing so. We will only share information with others where you agree that we can.

Why do you need a support plan?

It will help identify the support you need. It also helps us to provide you with the most appropriate support to help you to stay independent and look after your health. The Sheltered Housing Officer can assist in co-ordinating these services and linking with new ones.

What if your circumstances change?

We will review your Support Plans every six months. If you want to discuss it sooner, or there are any major changes in your circumstances, please notify the Sheltered Housing Officer, who will seek to review it.

Any reviews will be at a time and place that is convenient to you.

Supporting People programme

Who pays for all the extras in sheltered housing?

The cost of all the communal facilities and the cleaning of the communal areas are all included in your rent as a “service charge”. If you receive housing benefit to help pay your rent, the service charge counts as part of your rent and is covered by the Supporting People Programme.

The only exception to this is where we provide the heating or hot water in your home as part of the service charge; the Supporting People Programme does not cover that part of the service charge, nor the water rates.

The Supporting People Programme is a way of funding housing related support services by the government. Housing related support services include community alarms and day-to-day support and advice, such as those provided by Sheltered Housing.

From 1 April 2003, Plymouth City Council, through the Supporting People Team, has been funding these services. If you are entitled to housing benefit or have had a “fairer charging assessment” and have been assessed as not eligible to pay for your support, these services are free. You do not need to contact us about this since the new funding changes have been made, but if you feel you would benefit from a financial assessment your Sheltered Housing Officer can arrange this.

What if I want to make changes to my home?

Because we want you to be as comfortable as possible and because it is your home, we encourage you to make your home your own.

Decoration

You are responsible for the decoration inside your home and can therefore choose how to decorate it. "Care and Repair Plymouth" may be able to assist with low cost decorating.

Aids and adaptations

If you would find it easier to manage if you had alterations or special equipment, please ask your Sheltered Housing Officer who will refer your case to the relevant department.

Other changes

If you want to make other changes to your home and you are not sure whether it is okay or how to go about it, please put your request in writing to the Sheltered Housing Office. Please see section 11 of your tenancy agreement for further information.

Smoking policy

As a rule, smoking is not allowed in any of the communal or public areas, such as the lounges, kitchens, hallways or the communal toilets. You and your visitors may smoke in the privacy of your own home. You may smoke in the garden, provided you do not litter these areas with cigarette ends.

Fire precautions

Our schemes have a fire alarm system, including smoke alarms. All are tested regularly.

- **Please do not ignore any alarm.**
- **Please do not prop any fire doors open.** They are designed to stop any fire from spreading.
- **Please do not use the lift in event of fire.** If there were an electrical failure you could be trapped inside.

**IF YOU FIND A FIRE USE THE FIRE ALARM SYSTEM
IMMEDIATELY**

Scooters

Electric scooters are a great help to people who have difficulty getting around. But sheltered properties are quite small and do not have the facilities for battery charging at the moment.

Plymouth City Council and the Sheltered Housing Team are currently looking into this and hope to find a suitable resolution to this in the near future to enable everyone who needs to have a scooter to be able to keep it upon their move into Sheltered Housing in accordance with section 9.1 (m) of your tenancy agreement.

Plymouth City Council sheltered housing schemes

Belmont Court	Stoke
Brake Farm	Crownhill *
Broadland Gardens	Plymstock *
Brock House	Barbican
Camels Head	Weston Mill *
Helen Fox House	Devonport
Innes House	City Centre
Leypark Court	Estover
St Maurice Road	Plympton St Maurice *
Ron King House	Stonehouse
Pendeen Close	Southway *

* These schemes are mainly bungalows (and therefore small dogs and cats may be considered)

Sheltered housing philosophy

The Philosophy underpinning our Sheltered Housing Service Includes:

- a) A commitment to meeting the housing needs of older people by providing good quality specially designed housing.
- b) The creation of an environment within Sheltered Housing Schemes which has at its heart a commitment to promoting the independence of the individual and to enabling older people to live as normal and satisfying a life as possible within their own homes.
- c) A recognition that the people of any community have a responsibility to promote their own welfare, and that of their family, and neighbours; the service provided by the Sheltered Housing Service builds on this and complements it, but does not replace it. By encouraging independence and choice, tenants are exposed to the same physical and emotional risks, as any other people, and therefore cannot be protected from every risk.

14. Sheltered housing



- d) A commitment to ensuring that Sheltered Housing is outward and not inward looking and is a source to the local community whenever possible.
- e) A commitment to providing tenants with a home for life. Tenants should be able to remain in their own homes until death, if that is their wish, except when their care needs can no longer be adequately met in the settings of their own home, or when medical treatment in hospital is required.
- f) The provision of services should take into account the social, cultural and ethnic values, together with the religious beliefs for all older people.
- g) To provide an effective service for older people the Council needs to work closely with statutory agencies and the voluntary sector. Services will be provided in conjunction and in co-operation with other agencies, statutory, voluntary and private.
- h) Actively encouraging people to make personal choices and to enable them to do so by provision of information about the services available.
- i) Ensuring that the services provided for older people will be based NOT on stereotypes of old age or on chronological age, but on the individual physical, mental, emotional or social needs of the person.
- j) A commitment to quality, which ensures that tenants always receive the services they have been promised, and for which they have paid.
- k) Managing and respecting the delicate balance between observance of an individual's rights, with the rights and welfare of other tenants.
- l) Ensuring that staff in the Sheltered Schemes, provide tenants with a service that is accountable and professional.

Plymouth City Council

Civic Centre

Plymouth

PL1 2AA

Tel: 01752 668000

www.plymouth.gov.uk

Repairs Freephone 08082 306500

Sheltered Housing Services

106 Whinbank Road, Crownhill, Plymouth PL5 3AZ

Tel: 01752 306005

Area Offices:

Devonport Office

Granby Way

Devonport

Plymouth

PL1 4AB

Tel: 01752 304323

North Prospect Office

91/93 North Prospect Rd

North Prospect

Plymouth

PL2 2NA

Tel: 01752 306436

Estover Office

Leypark Walk

Estover

Plymouth

PL6 8UE

Tel: 01752 306548

Whiteleigh Office

101 Whiteleigh Green

Whiteleigh

Plymouth

PL5 4DE

Tel: 01752 304810