

TENANTS FEEDBACK ON INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT'S RECOMMENDATIONS

<p>RECOMMENDATION 1</p> <p><i>The four schemes without communal facilities should no longer be classified as sheltered housing schemes. Tenants in these schemes should be given the option of an assessment to establish their eligibility for Floating Support funding by Supporting People or priority to transfer to a sheltered housing scheme with communal facilities.</i></p>
<p>OBSERVATIONS</p> <p>Tenants in these schemes would be treated equitably and if eligible would access a similar support to that currently provided by the warden service. However, this would be funded by the Supporting People budget and would be free of charge. Tenants in these schemes would also be given a further reduction in their service charge.</p>
<p>FEEDBACK FROM TENANTS</p> <p>Tenants asked who would assess their needs for support and were keen to know that trained assessors would carry out the support assessment. They also wanted an assurance that they could be included in the floating support service at any time their needs change.</p> <p>Tenants were concerned that if their accommodation were re-classified as older persons housing, allocations would be made to younger people. They were assured that eligibility for their schemes would be 60+ but if the waiting list is exhausted, the age band may drop slightly until the property is offered successfully. There is however no blanket policy to lower the age range for older persons housing and it is unlikely that the council would allocate these units to younger people.</p> <p>Tenants were also concerned that they may be asked to move to alternative accommodation if they are not eligible for support. They were advised that this would not happen.</p> <p>Generally tenants were agreeable to the proposals to de-classify these schemes but were informed that a full consultation exercise would need to be undertaken as only 18 tenants out of a potential 133 were in attendance at the meeting. Their views would not therefore be representative of everyone.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 2</p> <p><i>The objectives developed in the consultant's report cannot be met with the current service configuration and therefore it is recommended that Caerphilly moves towards developing a 'cluster based service delivery model' (See Appendix 2 for potential configurations).</i></p>
<p>OBSERVATIONS</p> <p>Following the guidance from Welsh Government in July 2012, it is clear that revenue funding through the Supporting People programme will face severe cuts through removal of the de-pooling subsidy and the move from blanket funding for support to sheltered housing tenants to one based on 'assessed need'. Also, in terms of strategic relevance, funding for a service for some people who have no need of it while others in the County Borough who need support services are not offered them is seen as equitable.</p> <p>Funding to provide a traditional warden service, e.g. one warden for each scheme will not be possible in the future and the current service no longer meets the needs and aspirations of older people. Whilst change will prove challenging for both tenants and staff, the review's objective is to identify a higher quality and sustainable service providing more support and social/health/wellbeing opportunities that can be achieved from the current service model. Maintaining the 'status quo' cannot offer a sustainable solution so three options were considered:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering only housing management services within sheltered housing schemes with support services being outsourced to another provider • Introducing a service whereby staff are employed according to the number of units they manage • Introduction of a cluster based service delivery model

FEEDBACK FROM TENANTS
<p>There was considerable discussion around this recommendation in every scheme and tenants expressed the view that the current arrangements whereby schemes share a warden service are unsatisfactory. Their main objections to these arrangements is the uncertainty about when a warden will be on site in their schemes and the amount of time that a warden service is not available when wardens are on leave or away from work for other reasons.</p> <p>Tenants were unanimous in every scheme in supporting the cluster group option as long as they have a guaranteed warden service for specified hours five days a week. Their support for this option is absolutely conditional on this proviso.</p>

RECOMMENDATION 3
<i>The term 'Warden' widely viewed as outdated, should be phased out and replaced with the new frontline staff title 'Housing and Support Assistants', which better reflects the new service delivery model.</i>
OBSERVATIONS
None
FEEDBACK FROM TENANTS
Tenants were unanimous in stating that they had no interest in the job titles and were only concerned with the quality of the staff and the service delivered.

RECOMMENDATION 4
A new job description for this role should be drawn up and a proposed range of key tasks should be available.
OBSERVATIONS
Tenants are not always aware of the tasks that a warden undertakes and sometimes fail to make a distinction between delivery of personal care (provided by Social Services) and support.
FEEDBACK FROM TENANTS
In all meetings, tenants were pleased to have a list of the key tasks to be undertaken by wardens in their new role. They have repeatedly asked for this information and are satisfied that this has now been provided and that they have a fuller understanding of the tasks covered.

RECOMMENDATION 5
The title 'Sheltered Housing Officer' should be replaced by Housing and Support Officer, as this would also better reflect the new service delivery model.
OBSERVATIONS
None
FEEDBACK FROM TENANTS
As with recommendation 4, tenants were unanimous in stating that they had no interest in the job titles and were only concerned with the quality of the staff and the service delivered.

RECOMMENDATION 6
<i>In addition to the Housing Support Assistants and Housing Support Officers posts, the introduction of a new Activities Co-ordinator post is also recommended</i>
OBSERVATIONS
The Supporting People Team have already confirmed funding for this post and tenants were advised

that a job description is currently being drawn up, which will then be job evaluated prior to business case being approved and the job being advertised

FEEDBACK FROM TENANTS

Tenants in all consultation meetings were very supportive of the introduction of this new post.

RECOMMENDATION 7

As part of the new structure, a Service Manager's post is recommended to manage Older Persons Housing Services, including both the sheltered housing and floating support services as well as responsibility for the hardwired alarm strategy.

OBSERVATIONS

The creation of an Older Persons Housing Team would provide a focus for the delivery of older persons services and bringing the three services together would provide greater flexibility for service delivery.

FEEDBACK FROM TENANTS

Tenants accepted that creating an Older Persons Housing Team would be more effective.

RECOMMENDATION 8

To meet the requirement to assess the housing related support needs of each tenant the introduction of a 'banded' service is recommended.

OBSERVATIONS

This is quite a complex issue and there was a lengthy discussion on support assessments in all schemes.

FEEDBACK FROM TENANTS

Tenants wanted an assurance that the assessments would be carried out by competent assessment officers and were satisfied that the assessors would be trained as 'trusted assessors' with the necessary skills and competences to undertake this role.

They were also in agreement with the proposals that two Floating Support Officers would undertake the initial assessments for all sheltered housing tenants to ensure consistency of approach. In response to a query about updating assessments, they were informed that the scheme wardens would undertake the re-assessments. They were in agreement with this proposal.

They were also pleased to learn that re-assessments could be requested at any time there is a change in their circumstances.

RECOMMENDATION 9

Implementing a new service model of the kind recommended requires considerable resources and from Ridgeway's experience the process can take up to 12 months from a decision to proceed to the 'go live' date for the service.

OBSERVATIONS

Twelve months is a challenging timescale for such a major change but based on the experience from tenants in other organisations where similar changes have been made, they were of the opinion that once a decision has been made, changes should be implemented as soon as practicable.

FEEDBACK FROM TENANTS

Tenants were unanimous in supporting a twelve-month implementation plan, subject to ongoing consultation and regular updates.

RECOMMENDATION 10
Ensuring that all staff are well trained to provide a quality service that meets best practice objectives will be essential if the transition to the new model is to be successful.
OBSERVATIONS
Tenants were informed that the Council is committed to ongoing training for all staff and would be supportive of this recommendation.
FEEDBACK FROM TENANTS
Tenants were happy to support this recommendation, as they wanted to be sure that staff would have the skills and competencies to undertake their new roles.

RECOMMENDATION 11
A further report on developing improved services for older people as promised in the offer document will be submitted in due course.
OBSERVATIONS
<i>A number of consultation meetings took place in May 2013 where older people in non-sheltered designated older persons housing were invited to attend to discuss service improvements.</i>
<i>In addition, the questionnaires sent out in December 2012 also sought their views and their responses were taken into account in the independent consultant's report.</i>
FEEDBACK FROM TENANTS
Tenants expressed considerable interest in the development of handyperson, decorating and gardening services
In summary, the majority of tenants were supportive of the proposal to introduce a cluster based delivery model and the proposals for the assessment process. Many tenants agreed that they currently do not need a daily support visit but would want an assurance that support would be provided on a flexible basis if their needs change. Although interested in some of the other recommendations, the future delivery of the service was their main concern.