



## **CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP – 18TH SEPTEMBER 2014**

**SUBJECT: OLDER PERSONS HOUSING – PROGRESS REPORT**

**REPORT BY: INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To update on the progress made by the Older Persons Housing Team through the implementation of the new service model. This report highlights the positive changes made in relation to the development of this service area.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The options report presented to the Caerphilly Homes Task Group in September 2013 identified a new model of service delivery to ensure that older persons' needs are met through tenure neutral, needs assessed services.
- 2.2 Significant changes have been made to the former sheltered housing service to encompass the housing related support needs of older people across the stock within Caerphilly Homes.

### **3. LINKS TO STRATEGY**

- 3.1 This report continues from the report of 5th September 2013 and meets the aims of local, regional and national strategy to enable older people to live well and independently for as long as possible.
- 3.2 The documents, plans and strategies that drive the strategic direction for the new service and/or which supports the aims of the new service delivery are:-
- Single Integrated Plan
  - The National Housing Strategy
  - The Local Housing Strategy
  - Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Strategy
  - Corporate Improvement Plan
  - Strategic Equality Plan – Objectives 3,4 and 5
  - Welsh Housing Strategy – April 2010
  - The Older Persons Strategy
  - Supporting People Programme Grant Guidance – July 2012
  - Supporting People Caerphilly – Planning for the future, 2013- 2015
  - In One Place – Aneurin Bevan Health Board/Five Local Authorities, 2013

## **4. THE REPORT**

### **4.1 Background**

- 4.1.1 The Sheltered Housing Review-Final Update reported to the Caerphilly Homes Task Group on the 5th September 2013 provides the background to this progress report. The report covered a number of areas in which progress was being made following a strategic review of the service area.
- 4.1.2 All changes made within older persons' accommodation included consultations with tenants and other affected stakeholders. Where personnel implications have been identified staff have worked closely with personnel and the trade unions to ensure changes have been implemented as agreed at the time.
- 4.1.3 A new service delivery model was identified to ensure that older people, regardless of where they lived had the opportunity to receive housing related support should they need it. In sheltered this is in the form of the cluster model, and for other accommodation with Caerphilly Homes the service is provided through Floating Support. This new type of service delivery ensures older people get the support they need, when they need it but also enables independence and community cohesion.

### **4.2 Sheltered Housing**

- 4.2.1 Following the independent consultants report and full consultation with tenants and stakeholders, option 4 – a cluster service delivery model was agreed and implemented. There are currently six clusters, and staff members working within a cluster are required to support each other to ensure all schemes have a visit from an officer every day, Monday to Friday. Staff have met the challenges head on and are adapting to the new ways of working. Staff were consulted, and it was agreed to change their job title from Warden to Sheltered Housing Officer, they are line managed by Sheltered Housing Team Leaders, formerly Sheltered Housing Officers. Appendix 1 shows the new cluster arrangements.
- 4.2.3 All staff are responsible for ensuring that cover arrangements are in place before taking leave. There appears to be less short-term sickness in the clusters as a result of this. The new cluster model has proved very successful and there has been 100% cover since its introduction.
- 4.2.4 Housing related support is offered to tenants through the banding system and all tenants will receive support at the level that is needed. Sheltered Housing Officers are able to make a judgement in discussion with the tenant if more or less assistance is required. Appendix 2 explains the banding system.
- 4.2.5 Throughout May and June 2014 'Meet and Greet' sessions were organised in all schemes, including the Extra Care scheme. These gave tenants the opportunity to meet all staff working in their area and to understand the direction of travel for the new service. Out of the meetings it was identified that further engagement was needed with tenants and monthly meetings have been set up. This gives tenants the opportunity to express their views on the area in which they live and work together to identify any areas that improvements are needed or would make life better. Initial feedback from the tenants meetings has been positive. Sheltered Housing Officers have been able to make progress on some outstanding issues that they were not party to before the introduction of the meetings. Tenants have reported that they feel that the meetings are really useful and that their voices are heard.
- 4.2.6 An Activities Coordinator will commence work in the Older Persons Team in the Autumn of 2014 and will work with Sheltered Housing Officers to introduce a range of activities and events that will enable people with different interests to engage in their community. This could be through things that are happening in communal areas or in the wider community. The Activities Co-ordinator will also be working closely with the Floating Support Team to encourage people in designated Older Persons Accommodation and general needs housing

to join activities in sheltered schemes and in the wider community. In addition, the Activities Coordinator will be working with other key partners to develop services across the borough that older people can participate in.

4.2.7 As part of the review it was identified that the cleaning methods needed reviewing. In conjunction with Cleaning Services a rota was agreed within current costs to clean all sheltered schemes across the borough. The new service was fully implemented by the end of April 2014 and there has been no adverse reaction to the new delivery of this service to date. The service will continually be reviewed to ensure that high standards of cleanliness are maintained in all communal areas.

### **4.3 Sheltered Housing Utilities Charges**

4.3.1 As part of the sheltered housing review process, a report on gas and electricity charges was submitted to Caerphilly Homes Task Group on 4th April 2014 recommending that:

- In schemes where tenants have their own gas and electricity meters installed that they should pay their own bills directly to the gas and electricity utility providers.
- In schemes where one gas and electricity meter supplies the whole scheme, that the actual usage for each scheme be charged retrospectively based on the previous year's charge.
- All tenants should continue to contribute towards the cost of electricity and gas consumption in communal areas within their service charge

4.3.2 A similar report was submitted on water charges recommending that:

- In schemes with single meters, the actual usage be charges retrospectively based on the previous year's charge
- In all other schemes tenant would be responsible for the payment of water rates based on the rateable value of their properties

4.3.3 Tenants were fully consulted on these changes and with support from the Sheltered Housing Team and the Rents Section's Tenancy Support Officers, a smooth transition to the new arrangements were achieved and are working well. The Housing Revenue Account is no longer cross subsidising these costs.

4.3.4 In the Meet and Greet sessions, tenants reported that they were satisfied with the new arrangements. It was reported in a meeting that tenants had seen a reduction in their costs as a result of the changes.

### **4.4 Floating Support**

4.4.1 Two Floating Support Officers were appointed to their roles in March 2014 and immediately started to prepare for the changes to the Older Persons Service. A third Floating Support Officer was appointed in June 2014. All tenants of the four declassified former sheltered housing schemes have received an opportunity for an assessment and further provision of individualised housing related support. Tenants that have taken up this opportunity where support has been identified have reported better outcomes. This includes reducing social isolation, being supported to maintain their tenancies, access to other agencies for assistance with aids, adaptations and financial assistance.

4.4.2 The Floating Support Officers are currently undertaking the initial needs assessment in all sheltered schemes. This was identified as good practice to ensure that tenants are assessed on an impartial, consistent basis. On-going housing related support needs would then be met by the Sheltered Housing Officer.

4.4.3 On completion of the Sheltered Schemes, Floating Support Officers will turn their attention to older persons designated accommodation and identify individuals to support on a regular basis as their needs dictate.

- 4.4.4 As with Sheltered, outcomes for older persons will be recorded through the assessment and support process to report to Supporting People the positive difference the housing related support is making to people's lives. This is a requirement to ensure the funding for the Floating Support Team continues to be provided.
- 4.4.5 Between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 17<sup>th</sup> July 2014, the Floating Support Officers completed assessments in the four former sheltered housing schemes in Caerphilly and in 28 sheltered housing schemes throughout the borough. They will have completed all remaining sheltered housing scheme assessments by early August 2014.
- 4.4.6 In April 2014, the assessment banding for support was set at bronze level as a default for all tenants in sheltered housing schemes and the four former sheltered housing schemes. This was pending the Floating Support Officers visits when some assessments were upgraded to the higher levels of silver and gold. As at 17.07.14, the outcomes of the support assessments are as follows:-

Band	Floating Support (4 x former sheltered housing schemes)	Floating Support Provision %	Sheltered Housing – Housing Related Support	Housing Related Support %	Percentage of overall total
Default			205 (awaiting assessment)	21.32%	205 (18.72%)
Bronze	118	88.72%	516	53.64%	634 (57.90%)
Silver	15	11.28%	186	19.33%	201 (18.36%)
Gold	0	0%	24	2.49%	24 (2.19%)
Void	0	0%	31	3.22%	31 (2.83%)
Total	133	100%	100%	100%	100%

## 4.5 Designated Older Persons Accommodation

- 4.5.1 Designated older persons accommodation is described as housing for older people that is not sheltered; declassified sheltered or extra care. Everyone within designated older persons' accommodation has received information in relation to the removal of the hardwired alarm systems. The full decommission of all properties will be completed by the end of 2014. The new delivery of emergency lifelines, accessed through social services, will now be targeted at people who need it.
- 4.5.2 All older persons in this accommodation and older people in general needs housing will be offered a Floating Support Service. In addition, Area/Neighbourhood Housing are going to introduce an annual visit to older persons' accommodation to ensure the voice of the older person is heard. We are also working with Customer First to investigate the use of the mobile communications unit to further enhance our links to older people.
- 4.5.3 The Activities Coordinator will work with the Floating Support Team to identify the options for assisting older persons affected by, for example, the effects of bereavement, social isolation or depression.

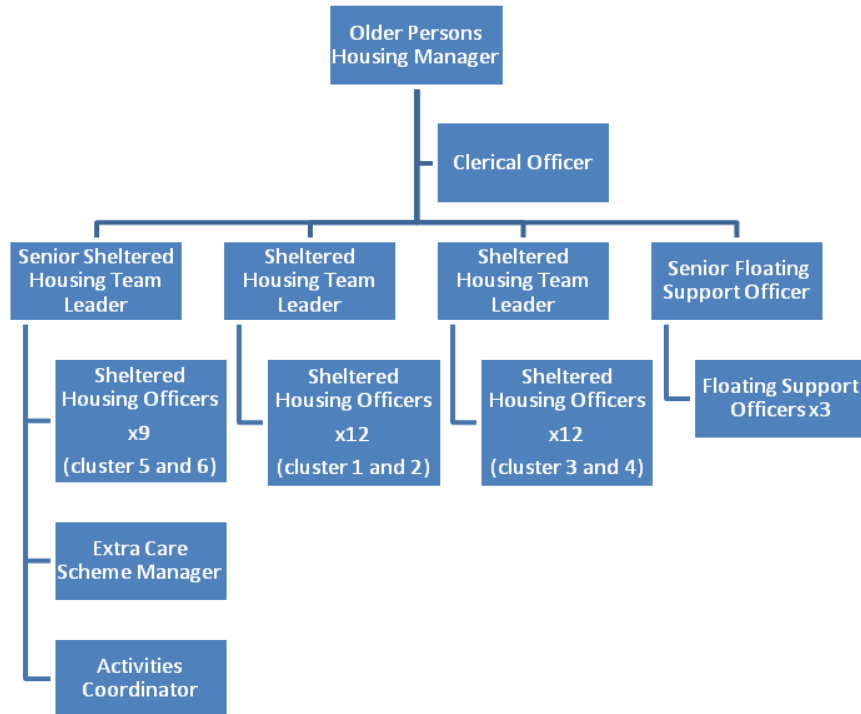
## 4.6 Declassified Sheltered Housing

- 4.6.1 Four Sheltered Schemes in Caerphilly (Denscombe, Waunfach, Nantddu and Grange Close) have been de-classified as part of the review process as these schemes have no communal facilities. The hardwired alarm systems in these schemes are being maintained and tenants in receipt of concessionary television licences prior to 1st April will continue to have preserved rights. Every person within these schemes has been offered a needs assessment by the Floating Support Team and initial feedback has been extremely promising. One tenant reported feeling more engaged with now more than at other times and was extremely grateful for the assistance the Floating Support Officer was able to give through a silver service.

Another tenant reported great satisfaction in the service because as a new person to the area the Floating Support Officer helped her to join a new group and make a new friend.

## 4.7 Staffing Structure

4.7.1 An Older Persons Housing Manager was recruited in March 2014 to provide the strategic and operation management of all older persons services including sheltered, floating support, extra care and alarm services. The appointment was shortly followed by the Senior Sheltered Housing Team Leader who has responsibility for the day-to-day management of the alarm service, the extra care scheme and part of the sheltered housing service.



4.7.2 The Activities Coordinator post has been offered and the start date is awaited.

4.7.3 The Senior Floating Support Officer is likely to be in post by the end of October 2014.

## 4.8 Other issues raised as part of the consultation process

### 4.8.1 Concessionary Television Licences

Tenants have been advised that most sheltered housing schemes may no longer be eligible for concessionary television licences. However, those tenants who were living in the schemes prior to the changes introduced from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014, have been informed that they have preserved rights unless they move from their current property. Once they reach the age of 75 years, they will be entitled to a free licence.

### 4.8.2 Handyman Services

This proposal has been developed and approved. The older persons working group were very pleased with the proposed service to assist older people with small works, such as fitting curtain rails. Plans are now being put in place for the implementation of the service.

### 4.8.3 Improvements

Issues around safety and security, scooter storage and car parking arose through the consultation process. These issues will be aligned to WHQS works on a scheme-by-scheme basis. However, a draft mobility scooter policy is been prepared and will be issued for consultation once complete.

4.8.4 Following concerns about access for wheelchair users, a decision was taken to carry out improvements at Pleasant Place Sheltered Housing Scheme including works that would meet

the RNIB 'Visually better' standards.. These works have recently been completed as a pilot project and similar works may be undertaken in other schemes when improvements are carried out. Such improvements will be aligned, where appropriate, with WHQS works. RNIB carried out an informal audit of the scheme on 18th July 2014 and were satisfied that the Council had met all their requirements. The communal facilities will re-open at this scheme on 28th July 2014 with an official re-opening for the tenants scheduled in August 2014. There will be an opportunity for the Older Persons Working Group members to visit this scheme in September 2014 and to meet with tenants to share their views on the improvements carried out.

#### **4.9 Partnership Arrangements**

- 4.9.1 The work of In One Place, the Aneurin Bevan Health Board special purpose vehicle to allow further collaboration between health, social service and housing has provided an environment for Housing to undertake closer working with these service areas.
- 4.9.2 Housing will continue to explore potential opportunities to work with Health and Social Care to identify whether any older persons stock can be used more effectively to help deal with the integration agenda and any progress will be subject to a separate report.

#### **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment is not needed because the issues covered are for information purposes only, therefore the Council's full EIA process does not need to be applied.

#### **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The full year costs of the new service have yet to be realised. There could continue to be deficit on the basis of the current service charge model (as reported in the September 2013 report). There is a commitment to investigating these figures further in line with the Government paper on transparent service charging.

#### **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Since the September 2013 report, recruitment into the new team has included a Housing Manager – Older Persons Services, a Senior Sheltered Housing Team Leader, three Floating Support Officers and a Clerical Officer.
- 7.2 An offer of employment has been made for the Activities Co-ordinator post and the recruitment process for the Senior Floating Support Officer is underway.
- 7.3 The situation with staffing levels in the cluster arrangements remains under review as the new model and ways of working beds in.

#### **8. CONSULTATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no consultation responses that have not been reflected in this report.

#### **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 To note the positive progress made to date in the development of Older Persons Services within Caerphilly Homes following the robust and comprehensive review of the service area.

## **10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 To ensure the Caerphilly Homes Task Group is satisfied with the progress made by Caerphilly Homes in implementing the outcome of the review of Sheltered Housing.
- 10.2 To provide a fair, consistent and improved service to older persons within sheltered and other housing across Caerphilly Homes.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

- 11.1 Housing Acts and Local Government Acts.

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### Background Papers:

Sheltered Housing Review – Final Update, Caerphilly Homes Task Group – 5th September 2013

### Appendices:

- Appendix 1: Cluster Arrangements
- Appendix 2: Banding information for Sheltered Housing
- Appendix 3: Banding information for Floating Support